THE MASTER'S WAY

BY CHARLES REYNOLDS BROWN

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A STUDY IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

BY

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PREFACE

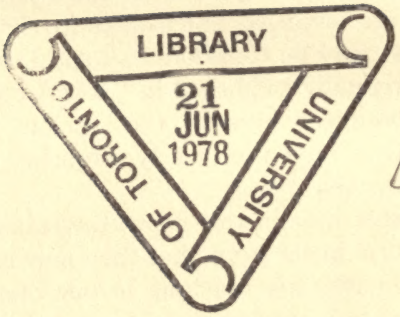
This is not a "Life of Christ." It contains a series of studies based upon the more significant actions and utterances of The Master as we find them reported in the Synoptic Gospels. These studies are arranged not always in chronological but in what I trust may be considered a logical order.

These chapters were originally published in "The Congregationalist," and are reproduced here by the gracious permission of its Editors. They have been freely retouched and in some cases entirely rewritten.

They are brought together here in this more convenient as well as more permanent form in the hope that they may serve the needs of those laymen who are teaching in our Sunday Schools or leading Bible study groups in city and college Christian Associations, or conducting lay services in missions or chapels. They were not written for the critical scholar and I shall not suffer disappointment if he passes by on the other side to find books better suited to his needs. These chapters are offered to those who, moving along the main travelled roads of human experience, would know more of "The Master's Way," that they too may walk in it with surer tread and a more resolute purpose.

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BOOK I

THE ONE WHO CAME

THE MASTER'S WAY

I

THE COMING HERALD

Luke 1: 5-53

It was Luke, the beloved physician, who gave us the fullest account of the events preceding and attending the birth of Christ. And the same beloved physician portrayed with dignity and delicacy the sacred anticipations cherished by the parents of John the Baptist. His sense of intimate touch with life prompted him to offer us certain narratives which are peculiar to the third Gospel. The study of origins becomes fruitful in affording intimations of the gains to be expected through development.

He seeks to show something of the setting of that life which Jesus soberly estimated as among the greatest born of women. He looks beyond "the spirit of the age," or the visible environment of this child who was to have such mighty significance as a forerunner of the Messiah. He undertakes to indicate and to estimate the potent influence for good to be found in certain parental desires and expectations as they found worthy expression in that unfolding life which thus answered to their hope.

"The child is father to the man," but all those forces which contribute to the initial impulse and direction of the child's life, as it enters upon its own particular orbit, are father to the child. The long, dry lists of names which stand at the beginning of both the first and the third Gospels, undertaking to give the genealogy of the family of Jesus for forty generations, are the attempts of men who sought to indicate that some at least of the forces which brought that match-

less life upon the scene lay securely embedded in their own national history.

The scientific men tell us that it took ten thousand years to rub the shaggy hair off the beast and produce the fair, clean skin of the human. They say that it took another ten thousand years to teach this higher form of life to stand erect in place of going on all fours with the ape, the tiger and the hog. We represent the outcome of that age-long conflict between the human and the brutal. The forces which help to make us what we are reach back through all those long dark periods of struggle.

And we in turn are casting whatever measure of aspiration and of high resolve we may be able to show, into the same patient process of advance. The spiritual forces which we help to set in motion are conditioning the lives of children yet to be born unto the third and fourth generations of those who love and of those who hate Him! Yea, the forces which have to do with the life of the spirit find expression in the determination of results even unto the thirtieth and the fortieth generation.

The beginnings of a human soul, how full of mysterious significance! How intricate are the varied influences which cause that fresh young life to show unusual capacity, it may be for good, or, it may be, alas, for evil! If the launching of a ship destined to sail the high seas in all weathers and to do business in great waters is an occasion fraught with deep solemnity to those who know the perils of the deep and the far-reaching significance of that world-wide traffic to which the great vessel is pledged, how much more the launching of a life facing upon an unending future and capable of carrying that priceless cargo of character which may link it to the Most High. We can understand how this spiritually-minded physician conversant with the hidden meanings and

potencies of life dwelt with reverent interest on the birth of one who should in splendid fashion "prepare the way of the Lord."

The beloved physician shows an interest in the now much mooted question of spiritual heredity. We find hard and fast lines drawn by some of the students of this mystery between "native" and "acquired" characteristics. But men of sense and wide observation will be loth to surrender their faith in the handing on of moral tendencies from father to son quite independently of the influence which may justly be attributed to similar environment. The physical characteristics which are steadily reappearing in certain human stocks seem but the outward and visible signs of certain inward and spiritual inclinations which are being handed on perpetually in a noble or an ignoble line of succession.

"Blood tells" in those horses which are deemed worthy to take part in the "track events," and blood tells in the dogs which "make" the dog show. Blood tells in the human beings who come up as candidates for college honors or for the more substantial recognition and rewards which belong to mature life. Whatever blessings and benefits may come with favoring environment and thorough training, it is an inestimable privilege to be well born the first time! The "new birth" in such case secures a better start for the life which is to run the race for an incorruptible crown.

The picture of these two parents, Zacharias and Elisabeth, in the presence of the promised fulfillment of their dearest hopes, has all the touches of reality. The reluctant faith of the father in the face of a great hope; the more ready and grateful faith of the mother; the deep sense of something august and sacred in the hearts of both—how true to life is all this! "The people waited for Zacharias and marveled that he tarried so long in the temple." When he made bold to

accept this new and deeper meaning of life which fatherhood involved, he lingered in the place of reverence and aspiration as best suited to his own mood of awe and devotion.

The sense of the responsible and unspeakably precious relation he would sustain to that young soul made any sort of immediate utterance seem distasteful and impossible. "When he came out he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple." It stands as a quiet rebuke to the flippant and frivolous spirit in which the fact of parenthood is sometimes discussed by those who have never seen a vision of its deeper meaning in the temple.

The old-fashioned office provided for the gratitude of the mother in the Book of Common Prayer, now so largely fallen into disuse; the solemn dedication of the life of the child to God and the recognition of his rights and interest in this new life which find fitting expression in the sacrament of baptism; the whole acceptance of the parental and the filial attitudes as being fundamental to the life of God and man; and the sacred undertaking to make each home an expression of the will and method of him from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named—all these have to do with the placing of a just emphasis upon the spiritual meaning and value of those experiences which are brought before us in this passage.

If our ears were less dull and were not drummed into unresponsiveness by the noise of the life material, the father and the mother in any home might in the hour of their great joy hear the same august message from on high. "I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God. I am sent to speak unto thee and shew thee these glad tidings." And if the initial responsibility of parentage were accepted in that high mood and in the enjoyment of that divine co-operation for the nurture of the newborn child, there would be less heartache

in store for the parents in the years that lie ahead. Their ears also might hear the assuring words, "Thou shalt have joy and gladness and many shall rejoice at his birth."

The rights of the child have been receiving clearer recognition at the hands of the civilized nations in the framing of their laws. The interests of the immature himself incapable of self-protection are the more jealously guarded by society as a whole in the expression of its will through duly enacted statutes. This wise care reaches back of the hour of birth and stretches its protecting scepter over the unborn child.

The further recognition of the right of every life to be well born, to have an honest start rather than a handicap heavy enough to be prohibitive of all high attainment, is on the way. It has already found expression in widely prevalent sentiment upon this question. Where any measure of intelligence and conscience is possessed by the diseased, they shrink from making their sorry bequest to other lives which shall be robbed at the start of a normal equipment.

The iniquity of child labor becomes the more apparent when studied in the light of its bearing upon racial development. When young girls of fourteen and sixteen are employed in factories where for twenty-six days in the month they are compelled to stand at their work ten hours a day, they find themselves ill-fitted for the joys and responsibilities of mature womanhood. When young women in department stores stand all day behind the counter with no seats provided for the intervals of leisure between the coming and going of customers, the ugly wages of such commercial cruelty are paid not by the employing firm but by the little lives in later years who find themselves handicapped from the start.

This recognition of the right of the child to be well born may yet find still more resolute expression in laws which forbid the marriage of the defective and the delinquent where

the abnormality passes a certain limit. It is a question to be decided not by majority vote in public assemblies nor by the passing of hastily framed resolutions by those who are not competent to judge. We shall need to turn to those physicians at once wise and beloved, possessed like this doctor of old of professional skill and of spiritual insight, to learn the courses of action which are best calculated to increase the number of lives destined in their maturity to "prepare the way of the Lord."

II

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Luke 1: 57-80

"There was a man sent from God whose name was John." There have been many such. John the Baptist and John the Apostle stand at the head of a goodly succession. John Chrysostom, the great preacher of righteousness in the Eastern Church, and John Wycliffe, the Morning Star of the Reformation in the Western Church, were men sent from God John Calvin and John Knox, John Milton and John Wesley, John Robinson at Scrooby and John Hall on Manhattan Island were all sent from God to bear witness to the Light. Time would fail me to tell of all the men of faith whose names were John.

Neither current custom nor the counsel of friends nor the family tradition guided the parents in bestowing this name upon their child. It was done in obedience to one of those mysterious impulses which the Hebrews simply and accurately called "the word of the Lord." The narrator loves to think that even in these less important details the devout parents were providentially guided in the care and culture of this child who should be called "the prophet of the Highest" and be competent "to guide the feet of many in the way of peace."

The nature of this John was stern and uncompromising. He laid his ax at the root of the tree. He sought by his winnowing fan to separate the worthless chaff for the burning from the wholesome wheat to be gathered into the garner. Yet this rigorous action was dictated by love. "The goodness

and the severity of God" have no quarrel. In certain situations goodness must be severe in order to be good. The unsparing severity of the surgeon cutting out some malignant growth which has become a menace stands as the highest expression of goodness. The radical opposition of John the Baptist to the sham religion of his day and to all that opposed the beneficent purpose of the Messiah whose forerunner he was, became a genuine kindness to the important interests at stake.

The unusual circumstances surrounding his birth portrayed in an earlier portion of this chapter had aroused expectation. They were esteemed prophetic intimations of coming greatness. "What manner of child shall this be?" men were saying as they saw the babe in the arms of his mother.

There were mysterious forces at work in his life which made it impossible for any definite answer to be given to this query. "The hand of the Lord was with him," the author says. "He was filled with the Holy Spirit" from the very beginning. In the presence of such energies at work and unimpeded by a refractory will we can readily believe that this life would be destined to wield a mighty significance in Christian history.

"What manner of child shall this be?" No one knew. No one ever knows the unrealized possibilities of any child's life. If some woman of means should entrust to you her jewels, diamonds, emeralds, rubies, you would know instantly, when once she had stated to you their monetary value, how much poorer she would be and how much poorer the world would be, were you to drop them in the bay. But if she should entrust to you for an hour as a minister of Christ, as a teacher in the Sunday school, as an associate or an employer, her boy, then you would find yourself utterly unable

to state how much poorer she would be, or how much poorer the world would be should you fail to do all that lies within your power to have that boy fulfill the highest purpose of his being.

What manner of child shall this be, if as a result of your influence and hers he becomes a Christian and invests his unfolding energies in the service of the Highest? No one can possibly predict the outcome. In the presence of the everlasting mystery of expanding and unfolding life, where the hand of the Lord is upon it for good, we stand bewildered. It is both stimulating and sobering to thus deal with interests where the full values cannot be rated immediately and given definite statement.

We have in this passage one of those early Christian hymns which have been collected in the great liturgies of the Christian Church. In the Book of Common Prayer we find the *"Benedictus,"* the *"Magnificat"* and the *"Nunc Dimittis"* with other finished expressions of the worship of that earlier time. How many hearts have been called to the high mood of thanksgiving in those noble words of the *"Benedictus!"* "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for he hath visited and redeemed his people. He hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David . . . to give light to them that sit in darkness and to guide our feet into the way of peace!"

How many modest lives witnessing the expansion of their humble resources under the divine blessing as they were yielded in service, have found their gratitude voiced for them in the words of the *"Magnificat!"* "My soul doth magnify the Lord, for he that is mighty hath done to me great things. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree."

How many devout souls having fought a good fight and

finished their course, having seen the realization of their dearest hopes, have whispered at the last these words of *"Nunc Dimittis!"* "Now let thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." The great Christian hymns of the ages, ancient and modern, gather up the best that has been seen and felt by the resolute souls who have joyously ascended up into heaven and found God there, who have made their bed in the lowest depths of sorrow and have found him there.

The *"Benedictus"* was a great, brave anticipation of spiritual results to be achieved in the future under the consecrated leadership of John the Baptist and in yet fuller measure through the One for whose coming he paved the way. But so confident is the singer in his prophetic mood regarding the sure results to be attained that he speaks of them as accomplished facts. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he *hath* visited and redeemed his people." His lofty ideals were grounded in that confidence of faith which at once gives substance to things hoped for, becoming immediately the credible evidence of things not seen.

He links up the past and the present in such a way as to bring out forcibly the historical continuity of that spiritual advance and to furnish reliable warrant for his high hopes. The "horn of salvation" was to be raised up in the house and from the lineage of David, the best king that Israel ever had. The splendid moral fulfillment would be in line with the hopes expressed "by the mouth of the holy prophets which have been since the world began." The mercies performed would be those promised to the fathers in the terms of an ancient and holy covenant. The spiritual results would be the accomplishment of an oath which in the dim ages of the past "the Lord had sworn to their father Abraham."

The seed wheat of future harvests is to be found in the moral gains already made. The tests which have been made as men have been proving many things have made plain certain principles which abide—we shall not need to perform these experiments again. And we shall best ground our expectations for further advance as we rest them upon those enduring lessons which the ages have taught us by such profound experiences as are indicated in these splendid hymns of faith.

The work to which John was called, like the task of the man in the "secondary school," was of necessity preparatory. "Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." It is the high office of many a life to plant trees whose fruit will not be eaten by the one who sets the roots in place. In every field of human effort patient sowers of seed are at work knowing that the glorious harvest will be reaped by other hands. So be it! There is a glory in laying foundations as well as in placing capstones.

It is only fair that each generation should take its turn in filling the rôle of John the Baptist. Other men have labored and we have entered into their labors. We shall only square the account as we lay foundations broad and sure on which our successors may build their finer achievements.

Count it all joy if you may in some situation the most obscure, perhaps, do a bit of honest, vital work and set it in the great process faced toward moral advance. The abiding forces of spiritual conservation will take it up and utilize it for that ultimate fulfillment which lies as yet, even for the boldest seer, far below the horizon.

"The child grew and waxed strong and was in the deserts till the day of his showing." The grim, meager, lonely character of the desert where stone and sand and barren shrub alone contend for attention with the blue sky and the burning sun,

all had their counterpart in the moral development of that rugged nature which in the days of his strength would come as a voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

III

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 2: 1-20

"Behold I bring you good tidings!" The familiar words first fell on the listening ears of shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night. They were standing guard over the helpless sheep, protecting them from the wolves and jackals, from the thieves and robbers which lurked among those Judean hills. Simple outdoor men they were, unused to theological subtleties! Plain minds they had, accustomed to deal with concrete realities! And to these men was made known the birth of the Messiah.

It was not the first time nor the last that splendid truths have been hidden from the wise and prudent by the very confidence of those men in their own powers of discernment and revealed to men of childlike habit of thought willing to be taught and led. The gravest charge which can be laid at the door of the learned Pharisees is that the greatest event in the moral history of the world took place under their very eyes and they did not see it. The Scribes and Pharisees were deaf to the songs in the air heard by the listening shepherds.

"Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass." The shepherds for many years had been leading their flocks in green pastures and by still waters. They may be competent to lead our minds into the presence and the meaning of this event which has altered the moral history of the race!

How strange that the birth of a child should change the calendars of the world! The Hebrews had been dating their

calendar from what they supposed to have been the period of the Creation. The Romans reckoned their time from the founding of the city on the seven hills. The Greeks reckoned their time from the first Olympic Games. But today if you meet a Hebrew or an Italian or a Greek in any part of the world and ask him what year it is, he will reply instantly, "Nineteen hundred and seventeen!" It is that long since the child was born in Bethlehem of Judea.

The child grown to be a man, exalted to be a Saviour, has so drawn the attention of mankind to himself, so gathered the forces of history into his own hands, so taken the moral government of the world upon his shoulder, as to make his birthday the fixed point from which England and America, France and Italy, Russia and Germany and all the more powerful nations of earth, reckon their time.

You think it is wonderful that wise men saw a strange star in the east, that shepherds heard songs in the air, that Luke, a Gentile physician, and Matthew, a Hebrew tax collector, recorded extraordinary conditions surrounding the birth of this child! These things are wonderful indeed, but none of them so wonderful as the solid fact that a child born in poverty and obscurity, in an out-of-the-way village in insignificant Palestine, should have thus impressed his birthday on the leading nations of the earth.

When Jesus reached his maturity and stood up to give his first public address, he said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." A year of the Lord it was indeed! A year of the Lord it has remained. And when we celebrated this birthday last December we wrote it, "December 25th, 1916, in the year of our Lord"!

Whatever else may be uncertain this is sure. However we may be confused touching the place of Christ in the ordinary

categories of human existence, here is that which is undeniable. Here stands the great fact of Christ, born into the world, steadily building himself into its intricate life, giving direction to the flow of its best thought, making his principles and methods the head of the corner, changing the calendars and changing the ideals of men so that we measure them according to their distance from him! Let us indeed go to Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass!

"Born this day in the city of David!" He was not a celestial being descending out of the clouds, detached, unrelated, unorganized with this human life of ours. He was born of a woman. He sprang from the house and lineage of David. If the human and the divine were set over against each other in irreconcilable difference then such a statement might bring permanent confusion. But the gospel proclaims the fact that between the human and the divine there exists a necessary and abiding kinship like that between the branch and the vine, the parent and the child. It is possible, therefore, that one born into our human needs and duties, into our human sorrows and delights should be at once Son of God and Son of Man.

The fact of the incarnation is the revelation in time and at one place of a truth universal and abiding. The tabernacle of God in the last analysis is not in the skies—"the tabernacle of God is with men," and he dwells with them. There was born to us in a certain family and in a certain village, into a certain system of instruction, into a certain form of industry, into a certain stage of the world's political and religious unfolding, a fresh expression of the nearness and the helpfulness of the Infinite Spirit. There was born to us in that city of David, a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.

The gift of Christ to be the Saviour of men is commonly regarded as God's supreme appeal to the conscience of the race. "Last of all he sent his Son, saying, They will reverence

my son." The claim does not rest on an arbitrary assertion. Who can stand beside him? Bring forward a more searching or helpful message than that found in his gospel and every minister in Christendom will declare it to his people. Bring a profounder source of motive and stimulus for right living than the one uncovered in his word and we will gladly use it in place of the accepted evangel. Bring something better to hold before the hearts of sorrow or the lives that have suffered moral defeat and we shall utilize it. But the offer of spiritual help superior to that found in the Christ is not forthcoming. Last of all and best of all, he sent his Son!

"To whom shall we go?"—the question is imperative. Somewhere we must go for our thought of God, for a final philosophy of life, for some sufficing source of spiritual energy to renew our depleted strength. We want the best—"To whom shall we go?" Let us go with the shepherds to Bethlehem and there in the face of Jesus Christ as his life matures we shall discern the character and disposition of the Eternal Father.

There in the matchless teaching of this Christ, when his lips shall have shaped themselves to our mode of speech, we shall hear the true philosophy of human existence. There in vital fellowship with him who was born in the city of David we shall gain renewal for all the springs of action. In that Saviour who is Christ the Lord, we discover an abiding source of moral help. Let us go to Bethlehem and meditate upon the things which have come to pass since that memorable night. We shall find ourselves moved to sing with fresh meaning, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will toward men."

"They came with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger." Rough and rude were the physical surroundings. Joseph and Mary were poor. Even on that

crucial night no better accommodation could they afford. The eyes of Luke the physician, accustomed to witness the stress of human existence, noted the pathetic details of the situation. In "the gospel of the Son of Man" we find the touches which most nearly relate this august life to all our plainest needs and sorest trials.

But the life which must borrow its glory from its surroundings shows the saddest poverty. The houses we live in, the chairs we sit upon, the clothes we wear are minor matters. Jesus borrowed nothing from his surroundings. He needed nothing. He was cradled in a manger. He was reared in the meagerness of little Nazareth, feeling the privations of a carpenter's home. He knew months of self-denial when he had not where to lay his head. He was destined to die not in a bed but on a cross and his body would be laid in a borrowed tomb. His rude birthplace was prophetic of the whole setting which would be given to his life.

How little it mattered! The life is more than meat. The body is more than raiment. And the soul within is a thousandfold more than either. The inner worth and the power to serve in any life become the true measure of its glory all apart from the accidents of its outer wrapping. The coarse appraisement made by current standards of success and well-being seem weak and mean in the presence of values which outlast and outshine the stars.

"The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for the things which they had seen and heard." They went back to the same old life of hardship and anxiety, but they went now in a new mood. The old earth is a different place when once it is seen to have a sky above it. The atmosphere of the field or of the shop is changed when once it has been filled with the songs of the angels. The Christmas message infuses new meaning and beauty into the old life of toil.

Have you never walked at night when the stars seemed nearer than the tree-tops, when to your own eyes the sky was aglow with an unwonted radiance? Have you never known some high hour when a heavenly host seemed to sweep into your vision? Have you never heard songs in the air which fell from no human lips? If you have never known such moments then, alas, for the meagerness of your inner life! But if you have entered upon these higher moods, your own heart will be the best interpreter of these stories of the Nativity.

IV

THE STAR IN THE EAST

Matthew 2

"We have seen his star in the East!" The initial impulse of every great religion has come not from the bustling, practical, inventive West but from the meditating and contemplative East. There is Judaism! In every synagogue in Europe and America the Rabbi stands and points eastward to the valley of the Euphrates. There he sees Abraham, the founder of his faith, following the leading of the divine spirit, and going out from his idolatrous surroundings to rear his family in the worship of one God. The cradle of Judaism was in the East.

There are the Buddhists! Theirs has been a missionary faith. It has spread from land to land. But in the Buddhist temples of Colombo and of Singapore, of Lhasa and of Tokyo the uniform habit is to point back to that sacred seat under the Bo-tree where Gautama sat for six years silent, receptive, prayerful, until the illumination came. The cradle of Buddhism was in the far East.

There are the Moslems, powerful, aggressive, fanatical in their allegiance to Islam! Whether you find them under the Southern Cross or on the high tablelands in Thibet or along the Bosphorus they are faced toward Arabia where Mohammed made his flight from Mecca to Medina, where the Koran was written to teach men, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." The cradle of Islam was in the East.

And our own Christian faith as well! It has won its greatest victories, it has come to its fullest vigor and maturity in

Europe and America, but this is not its native soil. The great Christian cathedrals of Europe are built always with the altar end to the east that worshipers may habitually face toward the quarter whence light has come. It is an added testimony in stone, mute but enduring, as to the birthplace of our faith.

Jesus was an Oriental. His flowing robes, his style of speech, his manner of life, all belong to the East. When we read therefore of a mysterious star seen by wise men in the East it matches the rest. The self-perpetuating missionary religions have all come from the East.

The wise men came from the East with this fundamental inquiry on their lips, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" The Jews were the spiritual leaders of the race and "the King of the Jews" might well be king of the whole moral realm. It was a fundamental inquiry which they brought. Where in this visible universe, where in recorded history has the Almighty given that tangible expression of himself before which wise men may bow in final allegiance?

This fundamental question was first asked by men of insight and judgment—wise men they were. It was asked by men of moral earnestness—it was in no spirit of idle curiosity that they made this journey across the sands in search of the Coming One. It was asked by resolute men willing to give of their best when they found the object of their quest. When they saw the One whom they sought they opened their treasures and laid at his feet gold, frankincense and myrrh, the value, the beauty and the fragrance of their love. They asked their question as wise, earnest, generous men, and they found their answer in the child born in Bethlehem of Judea.

The wise men undertook their quest in dim uncertain starlight. They had some intimation that a Messiah would come. Then they learned the name of his country—he was to be born "King of the Jews." They followed up this clew until by

diligent, persistent search they knew the name of the town—it was Bethlehem in Judea. At last they knelt before the One they sought and rose up ennobled and enriched. The man who takes his own uncertain vision of the Eternal Goodness, of the divine purpose for him, of the privileges he might enjoy at the hands of spiritual reality and follows on, will find at last that which satisfies the utmost demand of reason and aspiration.

It was a time of expectancy at Jerusalem also. The students of Scripture searching the ancient prophets believed that some glorious fulfillment was at hand. To the listening ears and sensitive hearts of shepherds keeping watch over their flocks, the air became vocal with mysterious meaning. Devout saints like Simeon and Anna were waiting for the consolation of Israel.

We find this spirit communicated to those who were morally careless, even as the spirit of Christmas finds its way into many a profane place. "Herod the king was troubled" lest this Coming One might dispute with him the right to reign. He summoned the chief priests and demanded of them where the Messiah should be born. He had an interview with the wise men inquiring anxiously as to the meaning of the strange portent in the sky. Finally he said, insincerely, but voicing the dominant mood at Jerusalem, "Search diligently for the young child and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I may come and worship him also."

They found him in the manger of a stable! The people of that generation found him ever amid the lowliest surroundings. He was cradled in the modest home of one who wrought with saw and plane. He was reared in a community so unpromising that it had become a proverb, "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." He was so cramped in resource that for months he had no place to lay his head. He was scorned by the titled

and the powerful in church and state. He was compelled to choose his intimates from the peasants, the fishermen and the farmers of that region. He was doomed to die upon a cross between two thieves. In his whole life the advantage of outward circumstances was reduced to its lowest terms.

But greatness in the realm where he was born king does not lie in externals. The place of one's birth, the elegance or the simplicity of one's surroundings, the length of one's bank account, the petty social distinctions so vital to many minds—all these are minor matters. Real greatness is measured in terms of personality. The power to see and to say, the ability to feel and to aspire, the strength to act and to serve, this alone makes a life great.

There are many who search diligently for him among those ecclesiastical splendors which have come in his name. They feel that if they can but enter the stateliest, costliest cathedral it has entered into the heart of man to build; if they can listen to loud swelling anthems and Te Deums where Christ's name is enshrined; if they can inhale the fragrance of those clouds of incense which rise before him from many altars; if they can participate in the gorgeous ceremonial of the Christian Church in its most ornate form, they will find the One who will bring peace to their souls.

But the hint given us in those original lowly surroundings where the wise men found him is not to be disregarded. We shall come nearer to the energy of his holy will, to the beneficence of his gracious purpose, to the healing touch of his boundless compassion, if we look for him in quite another quarter. Let memory and moral imagination fill in the requisite material to complete this ellipsis, "Inasmuch . . . unto Me!" When you have done that you will know where to search for him.

In those impulses of fidelity, devotion, tenderness which

make the intimacies of domestic life sweet and sacred; in those integrities, heroisms, humane considerations which redeem commercial and industrial life from its sordidness; in that splendid adherence to principle and that subordination of private interest to the public good which lifts political life to its rightful dignity; in those lovely, thoughtful, affectionate outgoings of kindliness which are aiding the poor, the needy, the struggling to a more equitable share in the good things of God—in all these Christ is born anew to be king over the lives of men. In all these Christ dwells. If we "search diligently" we shall there find him.

Search diligently and you will find Christ at the head of the best thought, the purest desire, the noblest resolve for the betterment of the race! Find that and you find him. Cast in your lot with that and you are following him. Make intelligent consecration of your best powers to the lines of effort proposed by the best thought, the purest desire, the noblest resolve discoverable in Christian society and you lay at his feet your gold and frankincense and myrrh.

How it dignifies and enriches all our homely tasks to thus relate them to spiritual purpose! The man with the hoe intent upon doing a lowly but necessary bit of work that the race may be fed; the woman with the dust cloth intent upon order, cleanliness and sound health for her loved ones; the merchant with a desk full of tiresome orders, invoices, bills, resolved to make his business a social utility in meeting the needs of mankind; the teacher harassed and wearied by thoughtless and restless, stubborn and stupid immaturity, but determined to make some contribution to a better type of personality in all those urchins; the charity worker, puzzled, baffled and disheartened oftentimes but unflagging in the desire to bring those defective and delinquent lives up to some worthier state!

"Drudgery," you say? It is just that! But when we realize

that it all shades off from the seen and temporal into that which is unseen and eternal; when we realize that a cup of cold water given in the right mood is not without its reward in spiritual accomplishment; when we realize that diligent search will enable us to find him and the outworking of his holy purpose in all this unselfish fidelity to duty, then we shall be ready to return from Bethlehem with that original Christmas congregation "glorifying and praising God" for the things we have seen and heard and felt.

V

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE

Luke 2: 22-39

How careful the attention given to that ceremonial which formed the setting of a religious life in the time of Christ! Jesus was duly presented in the Temple. He suffered the Jewish rite of initiation. His mother fulfilled the requirements of the Hebrew ritual touching motherhood. When he attained his maturity the Master was baptized by his servant in the River Jordan. And to a government whose limitations he beheld with clear eyes, Jesus nevertheless paid his tribute money.

Thus it becometh the perfect life to fulfill all righteousness. Custom is grounded as a rule in some measure of reason and justice or it would not have become custom. The well-worn path is well worn because it has served the needs of many. And in all the liberty of his own matchless spirit Christ would still bear witness to the value of those ceremonies which aid in clothing the daily round with sacred meaning.

"Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due: custom to whom custom: fear to whom fear: honor to whom honor. Owe no man anything but to love one another." The full measure of liberty which the conscientious Christian, having escaped the bondage of the law, claims for himself does not seek expression in the avoidance of duty, but in a finer form of obedience to the legitimate demands of "all righteousness."

It is significant that the intimation of the approach of the infant Messiah came to the devout Simeon and Anna as they

waited in the Temple. The satisfying vision of spiritual reality commonly shapes itself with reference to each man's dominant interest. The wise men in the East, students of the stars, were led to Bethlehem by what they saw in the sky. The music-loving shepherds as outdoor men heard songs in the air while they watched their flocks by night. The thirsty woman at the well in Samaria received gladly an offer of spiritual satisfaction pictured as "living water." The Galilean fishermen saw the venture and the mystery of Christian service portrayed in that summons to become "fishers of men." And here the two aged saints whose main interest was devotion, lingering for worship in the sacred precincts of the Temple, receive the glad tidings that the Messiah is being presented before the Lord.

"Then Simeon took him up in his arms and blessed God." It was the meeting of age and of infancy. The ripened saint had been waiting for the consolation of Israel and now when the time of his departure is at hand he is permitted to see the desire of the nations. The long periods of anticipation and preparation for "the Coming One" here meet and touch the advancing ages of fulfillment as they move by the orders of One who is to reign until he has put all enemies under his feet.

What a picture, when the aged man lifted the young babe and gave thanks to God! "The lingering past holds the new born future in its arms singing"—and singing not in somber, melancholy regret, but in glad and prophetic anticipation. His face is toward the morning as he holds the child aloft and sees the first gleams of a light that will lighten the Gentiles and become the glory of his people Israel.

He is to be "set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel." The effect of his truth will be to put down some of the mighty from their seats and to exalt them of low degree. By his truer appraisement the publican standing afar off con-

fessing his unworthiness will go down to his house approved while the self-confident and self-satisfied Pharisee will come in for lasting condemnation. The rough men of toil will become apostles of light while the privileged sons of the kingdom will be cast into outer darkness. In the moral rearrangements under the eye of one who looks not on the outward appearance but on the heart the first will find himself last and the last be promoted to be first.

Under his benign influence "the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Jesus interprets each life to itself. He holds before every soul a vision of its own unrealized possibilities. "Come and see a man who told me all the things that ever I did," cried the woman of Samaria. She did not mean that the Master had recounted all the sorry performances of her disgraceful past. She meant that he had revealed to her an unsuspected capacity in her own guilty life for renewal and for growth in goodness which she had regarded as forfeited forever. The inspiring discovery of every life to itself and the awakening of impulse for that high quest of self-realization is one of the splendid offices of the Saviour.

It was because Simeon and Anna lingered in the Temple that this vision of the coming Messiah was vouchsafed to them. The just and devout who wait for the consolation of Israel are found in the place and in the mood where the manifestations of the divine become natural and inevitable. The prayerful heart of the old man thrilled at the approach of the child. His own aspirations were attuned to the fundamental purposes which underlay the coming of the Messiah. When a full chord is struck on a Steinway Grand in the salesroom the corresponding strings on all the other pianos perfectly attuned vibrate in sympathy. The holy and devout souls of all lands and times thus knit up in a mystic communion of saints show themselves capable of a like response.

The saints "in waiting" lingering before God in thoughtful acts of worship for the renewal of their strength receive many an added manifestation of the divine helpfulness. It was good that the aged saints were there. It was good that the young child was publicly presented according to the custom of his people. He received their recognition and the added blessings invoked by these ripened saints. The mother kept in her heart their mystic sayings and prophetic words to be repeated to the child when he should reach the years of moral response.

The christening of any child in the place of worship becomes an occasion full of spiritual suggestion and prophetic meaning. This child too may be set for the fall and the rising of many. This child too may interpret many a life to itself in some high calling which touches human interests vitally. The thoughts of many hearts may be revealed through the finer service rendered by this child in the years ahead.

The presentation of any child in the temple with words of Scripture, of consecration and of prayer sets forth the deeper values of the family life. The recognition of God's rights in the child; the public acknowledgment of gratitude to the author and giver of life for this added joy; the open acceptance of the solemn duties and responsibilities of parenthood; the grateful acceptance of the welcome accorded to this little life into the fellowship of aspiring souls by the witnessing and worshiping congregation—all these interests are worthy of being invested with their full spiritual significance through the employment of appropriate ritual.

When the ceremony had been performed then Simeon sang his "Nunc Dimittis" in the full serenity of accomplished hope. "Now let thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." It was only the faintest beginning of that august career which would change the moral currents of his-

tory which Simeon had seen, but the promise of the future was there contained.

The eye of faith sees already in the patient action of the sower of good seed the ripening harvest which is four months away. The eye of faith sees in the devoted and concerted action of the other seventy disciples who set forth in the name and in the power of their Lord, the forces of evil falling like lightning before their heroic advance. And here in the face of a little child destined to show forth the glorious character of the Eternal without lack or blemish, the eye of devout faith beholds already the great fulfillment which opens the lips in grateful praise.

What a lovely picture the lesson leaves with us as the old man singing his song of trust lifts high before us the child destined to reign until every knee shall bow before him in joyous allegiance! The face of untried promise and the face of ripened experience seem to open vistas toward the east and toward the west.

The east is where we look for the sunrise. It is the realm of beginnings. It is the seat of that which is fresh, new, unworn. Three gates of the city front toward the east. Above each one of these friendly gates is written a word of the Lord. Over the first, "Suffer the little children to come." Over the second, "Of such is the kingdom." Over the third, "A little child shall lead them." And through those gates bright-faced boys and girls are entering the city on their way to joyous, useful, Christian living.

"And on the west three gates," fronting toward the sunset. They look out upon those with whom the day is far spent—it is toward evening. The heat and burden of the day have been borne and the night is coming when no man can work. The fresh uncertain promise of childhood has ripened into some sort of fact. And over each one of these gates is written like-

wise a word of the Lord. Over the first, "At evening, it shall be light." Over the second, "With long life will I satisfy him and shew him my salvation." And over the third, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." And through those three gates many who have walked with him and worked with him these many years are entering into the joy of their Lord.

The aged Simeon and the infant Messiah! The reminiscent but expectant past holding the bright promise of the future in its arms and singing its glad song of hope!

VI

THE BOY IN THE TEMPLE

Luke 2: 40-52

"The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom." It was an all-around development, the nature filling out on all sides. Physical efficiency was not attained at the expense of the mind nor did intellectual growth dim the luster of the soul. "He increased in stature and in wisdom and in favor with God."

He was twelve years old when we find him in the Temple. In that warmer climate this might be equal to fourteen years with us. He had no halo round his head—the artists paint him so, but the straightforward men who wrote the four Gospels never speak of a halo because it was not there. He did not know everything—he was asking questions after the manner of a boy. He was a genuine boy growing up from babyhood a cell at a time, increasing slowly but steadily in size and in knowledge, in character and in social interest, commending himself alike to the favor of God and of man.

He had been taken up from little Nazareth to Jerusalem to attend for the first time the great annual Feast. The first sight of a city becomes a notable experience in the life of a boy. He saw many things during those eventful days which he had never witnessed before. And when the caravan with which his family traveled started back to Nazareth the boy detached himself from the company and at the first night's camp he was missing. Joseph and Mary returned to Jerusalem the second day and "after three days they found him in the Temple."

Amid all the attractions of the city the lodestone for this boy was the Temple. Its mysterious appointments and furnishings, its throngs of worshipers "from every nation under heaven," its whitebearded Rabbis and its spiritual suggestiveness, all made a profound impression on the sensitive nature of this boy. His main interest, his major study, was to be along the line of spiritual growth. The coming events of his moral career cast their shadow before. He turned away from the busy streets and the gay bazaars to ask his questions in the temple of God.

His presence there and his words denote three attitudes which are instructive. First, his attitude toward Mary his mother. There is a note of reproach in the words with which she greets him after the long search. She had been anxious and she utters her censure upon his course, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?" His assertion of independence, his taking of the initiative, brought a feeling of pain which all fathers and mothers fully understand.

The boy's answer holds two words which show the dawn of the sense of personal responsibility,—"I must." He felt that he must be about his Father's business. Here was a developing moral consciousness taking that life into its own keeping as ultimately responsible for it. He must begin to make decisions and to abide the results of them.

The mother cannot forever choose the boy's food, determine his habits, select his associates, direct his activities, as she did when she carried him a babe on her breast. She does not desire this, for such prolonged tutelage would rob her of the joy that "a man is born into the world." She faces the fact that the boy must learn to take his own life into his own keeping. This new self-assertion contained food for reflection and, "Mary kept all these things in her heart."

It did not involve an absolute break. "Jesus went down to

Nazareth and was subject unto them." There was a continuance of that gracious obedience which had been their joy. But with it went the acceptance by the parents of the fact that the boy had now a mind and a moral nature to be shaped by the determinations of his own will. There had grown up within him that which said "I" in clear consciousness of independent personality; and a further something, a moral sense, which said "must." And with this also there had come an unfolding appreciation of his share in the religious life of the world as he voiced his sense of participation in his "Father's business."

The utter absence of flippancy or conceit clothes the incident with wondrous beauty. Sometimes when a boy breaks the halter strap and bursts through the barn door in order to escape into the open field, it does not indicate the dawning of personality; it simply indicates that he has an attack of reckless conceit. Like measles it is ugly and painful while it lasts, yet under proper treatment he will recover. But in this incident in the life of the boy Christ we have the assertion of individual responsibility chastened and directed by tender regard for the wishes of the parents.

In the adolescent period a stupid insistence upon some particular pattern of goodness which God never intended for that particular boy, may prove fatal to growth. Ignorant dogmatism may work harm unspeakable to the interests of life as surely as does the careless indifference which allows the boy the final decision as to how he will use his Sundays, where he will spend his evenings, what sort of fellows shall be his associates. The boy whose judgment on any business proposition would not be rated as worth a tuppence is sometimes allowed to ignorantly shape those years which make or break him as a man.

Delicate and difficult is the task of bringing sufficient pressure of wholesome influence to bear so that the life may be

guided aright and yet not so much as to cripple or force the growth which should claim its share in that freedom which is man's distinctive right. Difficult indeed—the fine art of forming character makes by comparison all the other arts seem coarse. Raphael's task in spreading his high conception of a divine child on canvas in the Sistine Madonna was easy compared with the task of fathers and mothers, teachers and pastors, when they attempt to show results in flesh and blood worthy to be enrolled as "the children of God."

In the second place his presence indicated his attitude toward his instructors. "They found him in the Temple in the midst of the doctors hearing them and asking them questions." How true to life it all is! The boyish spirit of inquiry energetically asking questions! I once sat behind a mother with her boy on the train and he asked a hundred and thirty-seven questions between Boston and Worcester—I think that was the number, although the engine whistled at one point and I may have lost count while the boy kept rolling up the score with his steady flow of inquiry.

The boy in the temple was not asking foolish questions—"the people were astonished at his understanding." The questions which spring from a genuine interest in the problems which confront boy life are everywhere welcome. The healthy boy commonly approaches life with an insistent interrogation point in his hand and it is for maturer wisdom to give him an honest, useful reply.

The boy is about his father's business when he addresses himself inquiringly to those problems and mysteries which impinge upon his unfolding energy. What a frightful wrong where he is allowed to grope in darkness or be guided by the blind or the evil into the nearest ditch! The persiste[illegible]eal of unfolding life feeling its way toward the level o[illegible]

responsible existence should elicit the best the world has of sympathetic interest and wise guidance.

It has not pleased the Almighty to create boys with any great talent for keeping still. The actions are oftentimes nothing but meaningless motion. The questions are numerous and trying, but they serve to set the door ajar for the entrance of the great truths he is to live by. If our own wider experience can meet that restless eagerness and give it a bias, causing the boy to think hard upon whatsoever things are straight and square, true and clean, reputable and likeable, and to make them an everlasting personal possession, then the spiritual results will be beyond estimate. Foundations will be laid on which will stand pillars in the temple of God to go no more out.

And finally his action manifested his attitude toward God. The Authorized and the Revised versions respectively bring out the twofold thought in the mind of the boy in the Temple. He uttered his sense of claim upon the Father's attention—"I must be in my Father's house." He voiced his sense of personal responsibility—"I must be about my Father's business." The personal interest of the Father in the child and the personal obligation of the child to the Father, here are the two fundamental elements in all religious life.

The boy who is made to feel that he is forever in the way at home when older people wish to talk or to read; who is made to feel in church that religion is only for grave theologians or for good little girls, may be pardoned for possessing but a dim consciousness of the Father's personal interest in him. He has not been made at home in his Father's house. And the boy who is made to feel that the conduct of life belongs altogether to "grown-ups," that no particular value attaches to his immature powers, may be forgiven for a defective sense of personal responsibility.

After six days we find many a boy in the temple. The boys are there Sunday after Sunday looking and listening. They are thinking out their problems in a certain presence and atmosphere. They are deciding under the influence of august surroundings what shall be the way of life for them. If somehow we can lift clearly before their wondering eyes the Master of men, he will surely draw them unto himself that they may be forever in the Father's house and about the Father's business.

VII

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Mark 1: 1-8. Luke 3:1-20

What a grim list of names confronts us when the door swings back at the beginning of this chapter. "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John in the wilderness." Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate, Herod and Caiaphas, these were the men who held sway! Hold these four names before your eyes! Ponder their associations and you will understand why the word of this stern prophet was indeed the word with the bark on. When we read the time of day from this four-faced clock of political history we can well believe that the man in camel's skin with a leather girdle about his loins was the man for the hour.

The source of the success which was achieved by that stern ministry is indicated in a single statement—"the word of God came unto John." His power lay in his personal experience of divine truth. His labors rested on the sure foundation of the divine initiative. He came not leaning upon his own brief understanding of human need or moved merely by a vague wish to undertake the ethical culture of his generation—he was called, commissioned, empowered to prepare the way of the Lord and to make straight paths before the feet of the divine purpose.

The note of high, clear confidence appropriate to an accredited messenger delivering that which he has been given has fallen out of the utterance of many a modern prophet.

He does not speak about the sins and the needs of men, about the truth and the grace of God as one having authority. He speaks rather as one of the Scribes reciting a well-worn tradition. His deliverance may be bright and wise but it lacks that heavenly something, that quality of a "Thus saith the Lord" which carries on its face its own divine credential.

The official strut and pompous self-esteem of the ecclesiastic, feeling the full weight of his gown and bands, is only a weak caricature of the responsible servant of God endued with power from above. The silly imitation comes in for contempt, but people stand ready to give heed to the man who has received at first hand a word of the Lord which he must deliver under penalty of displeasing the One whose favor constitutes his very life.

The limitations of this stern prophet of righteousness are not blinked. He "came neither eating nor drinking"—he did not build his life into normal association and saving fellowship with the common interests. He was slow to recognize in the patient, merciful ministry of Christ, the true Messiah. John had pictured the Coming One as laying his ax at the root of the tree, as visiting the scenes of human activity fan in hand to purge the floor and burn up the worthless elements of human society with unquenchable fire. He was in doubt as to whether Jesus was the Christ or whether he should wait for another.

The general method of John's life was such that while he outranked all his predecessors according to the generous estimate of Jesus, nevertheless in both spirit and privilege, "He that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." To go apart from the common pursuits, roughly dressed, meagerly subsisting on locusts or wild honey and to utter the sternest condemnation upon the evil doing of men, may exhibit a striking indifference to human pleasures and reveal a pur-

pose of wrought-iron. But to go about eating and drinking, building one's influence into an actual, normal order of life, diffusing sympathy and giving nurture to even the feeblest beginnings of right life, this is a higher, a harder and a holier task. The greater man is the man who has caught the method and spirit of the Kingdom of Heaven.

We recognize all this yet we find something worthy of the highest admiration in the whole-hearted way in which John gave himself to the subordinate and preparatory work of clearing the ground for the laying of new foundations. He was ready to become merely "a voice" if only he might cry, "Make ready the way of the Lord." He would gladly acquiesce in an order of progress where his work would "decrease," if thereby the reign of the Christ spirit might "increase."

His main message may be summed up in the word, "Repent." He preached a repentance which does not mean a mere succession of weak and wet sobs over one's sins—it means an "about face." It calls for a change of purpose. It involves the making of all crooked paths straight and the rough ways of life smooth. It calls for changes radical and laborious like the grading and filling on a mountain road in preparation for the coming of royalty. John delivered his message in concrete terms to make clear the fact that true repentance does not rest in personal and hidden remorse—it must seek expression and bring forth fruit in altered conduct that all flesh may see the salvation of God.

When he preached this definite, clear-cut doctrine of repentance it "found men," as we say, "where they lived." He knew how to address his communications so that they would reach their destination. The multitudes who came to hear him as he preached in the wilderness did not go away saying: "Beautiful sermon." "Splendid effort." "One of his best." They came to him, saying, "What then shall we do?"

He gave them a straight answer. His "counsels to penitents" were clear and direct like his original summons to "about face." He told the men who had more food and more clothing than they actually needed to minister to the needs of those who lacked. He told the tax collectors to show their penitence by forsaking all manner of extortion. He told the soldiers who made trouble by foraging, by being quarrelsome and by their insurrections to show forth their new mood and purpose by doing violence to none, by making no false accusations and by being content with their pay.

He met every man at the front door of his own particular interest and failing. He pointed a straight forefinger indicating the line each man was to take as he began his moral advance in preparation for the coming of him who was to rule all these interests of daily life. In the expression of penitence sobs are cheap and tears are low-priced. But deeds of restitution and new modes of life are above rubies.

John was a hater of shams. When he saw a thoughtless multitude frightened by the announcement of an approaching judgment, hurrying out to be baptized as a kind of saving form, a ceremonial substitute for right living, a friendly shadow to stand between them and the impending crisis, he gave them a scorching rebuke. He likened them to the scared vipers scurrying through the grass as the dry stubble of the Jordan valley burned close behind them. He told them to bring forth "repentance-fruit"—that is to say new courses of conduct indicative of their desire to stand in just relations with the God of righteousness.

He gave a stinging rebuke to the complacent Pharisees and Sadducees who stiffly turned down his summons to newness of life, saying, "We have Abraham to our father." He bluntly reminded them that Jews merely as Jews are nothing. God is able, if need be, to make Jews out of stones. He could raise

up children to Abraham out of the rocks in the street. The real objects of God's interest are righteous men. These he cannot make out of stones for character is made only where free moral agents co-operate with God's grace and truth for its production.

In his every utterance this preacher in the wilderness brought out the truth that real religion is not form or ceremony; it does not rest upon the accidents of race or birth; it is not best expressed in sobbing emotion nor in frightened remorse. The question as to the reality and worth of a man's religion turns at last upon his fruitfulness, upon what grows out of him steadily and evenly as he moves ahead in his appointed calling.

The revival of religion needed today to prepare for the fuller coming of the Son of Man into our earthly life and to secure that richer baptism of all our relationships in the divine spirit, is a revival strongly ethical and genuinely social rather than ecclesiastical or emotional. Let the call issue north, south, east and west, for an "about face" toward righteousness in the common relations of every day life! Then all flesh may see the salvation of God!

This devoted forerunner never allowed his hearers to forget that he was a mere finger-board pointing ahead to Another. When "the people were in expectation and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John whether haply he were the Christ," he promptly turned their thought away from himself that he might direct it to the Coming One. He likened his humble office to that of the house servant who meets his master and unlooses his sandals as he enters the door. John baptized with water as a symbol of the moral cleanliness attainable through repentance, but he pointed ahead to One who would baptize with the Holy Ghost affording men the

spiritual energy demanded for patient continuance in well-doing.

We find one common characteristic attitude in all these Hebrew prophets—they are all pointing ahead as if they would say with the patriarch of old, "It is not in me; God shall give the answer of peace." Isaiah and Micah, Malachi and John the Baptist all pointing ahead to "a Coming One"! At last One came who said, plainly, "I am he." And when penitent men were made clean by the word which he had spoken unto them, he breathed on them until they received the Holy Spirit. Thus men are brought at last into the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of peace for whose coming the ministry of John prepared the way.

VIII

THE TESTING OF NEW-FOUND STRENGTH

Mark 1: 9-13. Matt. 4: 1-11

When Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan it marked a spiritual crisis. Whether that was the beginning of a full-fledged consciousness of his messianic mission we may not feel sure—it was certainly a unique hour in his personal development. The heavens were open and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove. The sky became vocal and he heard the divine voice say, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The rugged prophet of righteousness who had served as a forerunner bowed in humble reverence before the Light which he saw shining in a dark place.

"Then," the narrative says—in the hour of wondrous uplift and quickened spiritual consciousness—"was Jesus led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." With that open heaven before him, with the divine voice sounding in his ears and the mighty baptism of the Spirit possessing his soul, he was hurried away and for forty days he saw nothing but the desert and the devil and the wild beasts.

"Forty days!" We are familiar with the use of the word "forty" in Scripture where the exact number was not known. We often say, "I have told you forty times"—meaning an indefinite number of times. When the children of Israel drew near to their destination their leader said to them, "Remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness." When Moses went to the top of Sinai, "He was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights."

When Elijah in the hour of his discouragement had enjoyed the gracious ministry of God's messenger, "He arose and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb." When Jonah uttered his warning to the Ninevites he cried, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." In every case the period of time was indefinite in the mind of the writer.

"He was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan." How long did this temptation of Jesus continue? His time of trial too was for an indefinite period. I have a feeling that the testing of his strength reached all the way to Calvary. He was tempted in all points and from all sides, like as we are. "He learned obedience by the things which he suffered." His ability to say, "Not my will but thine be done," in that supreme hour was an achievement rather than an original endowment. He faced and fought the enemies of the divine purpose not in one single dramatic experience, as a hasty reading of this passage might indicate, but throughout his whole career as he bore witness to the truth and accomplished the will of him who sent him.

It is the common lot and the Son of Man was not exempt. Hard upon the dramatic experience, the inspiration of some moment of high privilege lifting us to the very mountain top, comes the necessity for moral testing and the obligation for patient effort in the dusty plain below.

The real test of the final worth and validity of any high experience comes when we inquire as to whether it can be carried from the mount of inspiration out upon the plain of useful achievement and on into the deserts of difficulty. Will the sense of an open heaven, a descending spirit and the feeling of divine approval endure for forty days, for forty years, for an indefinite period, enabling us in the strength of that meat to put down evil under our feet? The ultimate value of

any high mood is revealed as it finds or fails to find expression in those terms of useful achievement which have to do with the coming of the Kingdom of God.

The temptations are here attributed to a *Tempter*. There was no taint of evil in the Master to become an original source of temptation. There had been no previous sins to furnish further impulse toward evil. He was solicited by that which was no real part of himself. We find a general summary of the moral history of Christ in the fourth gospel, "The prince of this world cometh and he hath nothing in me."

But it was a real temptation. The fact that he did not yield takes nothing from the force of the actual solicitation to wrong-doing. The man who successfully resists temptation may feel the force of the temptation more than does the weak man who readily succumbs. In the latter case the will gives way before the recognition of the complete strength of the solicitation becomes a fact of consciousness, just as the man who successfully resists any kind of "pull" feels the power of it more than does the man who allows himself to be drawn along. The real measure of useful resistance in our moral material can best be determined by what it sustains without breaking, and the strength of evil's thrust can be similarly computed.

We have here apparently an account of what Christ himself thought of certain crises in his own inner life. It is plain that no one was present for he was "alone with the wild beasts," suggestive of the desolate scene of his moral conflict. He gave to his disciples this vivid, pictorial account of his own spiritual struggles.

He was tempted to make use of his exceptional endowments to further his own interests without reference to the Father's will. "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." He would upon occasion use his exceptional power to provide a hungry multitude with food, and would

share their food with them. He would not in selfish fashion lift himself alone beyond the reach of need by the use of his exceptional powers.

"If thou be"—Jesus does not argue the matter nor reply to the challenge by some piece of magic. He will commit his own needs into the care of the Father by an unfaltering obedience to his holy will. He will live by all the great words which proceed out of the mouth of God, faith, hope, love, believing that all the things which the Father knoweth that he has need of will thus be added to him.

Jesus was tempted to win attention and a following by a clever short cut. He was shown the swift results to be achieved by casting himself down unhurt from the pinnacle of the temple. The naming of "the pinnacle of the Temple" rather than some high cliff in the wilderness is significant. The greatest obstacle he would encounter in his work would be the dullness and bigotry of the Jewish Church. If he could only leap unhurt from the pinnacle of the temple into the midst of the priests, what a master stroke it would be! He would at once enlist their interest and carry their confidence by storm!

But he refuses to court danger in order to be miraculously rescued from peril. He will not tempt God. He turns away from the whole quixotic habit of disdaining the considerations of prudence and common sense in the supposed interest of a more complete faith in the supernatural. The hearts filled with disappointment over the collapse of the "Shiloh" enterprise or by the sorry outcome of the Dowie movement and the parents who bring upon themselves tragedies of sorrow by flaunting their spiritual ecstasies in the face of all the counsels offered by competent knowledge, would do well to read again the words of the Master regarding presumptuous confidence.

The devil was either clumsy or wickedly artful in his use of

Scripture on this occasion. The ancient promise which he cited reads, "He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." *In all thy ways*—exactly! But to cast one's self down from the pinnacle of the temple in showy fashion "is not going 'in one's ways' but quite out of them." It involves such a radical departure from the line of duty as to forfeit all claim upon God's providential care. If this clumsy use of Scripture is the best that the spirit of evil can do, then the devil had better stick to his last.

Jesus was tempted to gain a sweeping success by compromise with evil. The subtlety and the force of this temptation lies in the fact that the suggestion holds a modicum of truth. By moral compromises which may not seem serious at their inception, immediate and impressive victories are won. The devil magnified his jurisdiction somewhat in offering to turn over "all the kingdoms of the world" on condition that the Master should enter into some satisfactory arrangement with him, yet the power of compromise is beyond all question mighty.

But kingdoms which are won by "falling down and worshiping" the devil, by the lowering of aim, by the cheapening of ideals, by the dilution of moral values, are not susceptible of being made "Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ." There are victories so dearly purchased as to become defeats. In the furtherance of the great interests which Christ had in mind right method is imperative. "Worship the Lord thy God and him only serve!" The redemption of all those fields of effort upon which he was invited to cast his eyes and the conquest of all human interests by the mastery of moral purpose cannot be had on any easier terms.

We do not think of the Temptation as having been an outward, visible or audible transaction. If the motion picture man had been there his wonderful camera would have recorded

none of the movements indicated in the narrative. If the sensitive disc of the phonograph had been within hearing distance it would have registered nothing of this conversation between Christ and the powers of darkness. But if those who have eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to understand had been present, they would have witnessed a struggle where the supreme soul in history was wrestling not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of dark suggestion, against spiritual wickedness in high places. And they would also have beheld a spiritual victory and ministering angels rejoicing with him who overcame.

IX

THE CALL OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

Mark 1: 14-28. Luke 5: 1-11

How many of you in your journeyings about England have been on the southwest coast at the little fishing villages of Lynmouth, Clovelly and Ilfracombe. They lie off the turnpike. Thomas Cook & Son have not yet effaced the simplicity of the life there. You pass along the shore and see wrinkled, weatherbeaten fishermen, salty as dried codfish, "mending their nets."

If we could get the stained glass windows, the holy paintings and the pious imaginings of the picture-books out of our minds, we should see something like that in this passage. The fishermen of Capernaum and of Clovelly are far apart in miles but not in kind. The men Jesus saw and summoned to be his disciples were not fancy saints with halos round their heads—they were plain, rough, unspoiled, outdoor folk such as we find on the southwest coast of England. As he passed along he saw two such men, mending their nets.

Their homely employment looked back and it looked ahead. The nets had seen service; they had been torn by use. The rents were service stripes on these soldiers of the sea. The two men were putting in fresh, stout twine to repair the damage done by hard usage in useful accomplishment. And their action was in itself a prophecy—the nets were to be taken out and used again to catch more fish.

When the Lord calls a man to an important task he commonly chooses a busy man. He prefers a man who is on his feet ready for action. Gideon was threshing and Elisha was

plowing when they were called to be leaders in Israel. Peter was fishing and Matthew was collecting customs when they were summoned to be disciples. "If you want a thing done, go to a man who is busy." The professionally "leisure class" are commonly found "merely killing time at enormous expense." The busy people, the men who wear their habits of useful action as naturally as they wear their clothes, are the men to whom Jesus makes his appeal for helpers.

This first group of four was made up from two pairs of brothers. Jesus would have the natural relationships find their deeper consecration and their higher glory in a common devotion to the interests of his Kingdom. He would utilize and ennoble "the spirit of comradeship" already existent as a further asset in moral service. And the fact that "James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were partners with Simon" served still further to knit up these lives in a common interest as the Master enlisted them for a broader enterprise.

He couched his appeal for this higher form of service in terms made familiar by long employment. "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." He would utilize those instinctive reactions established by years of habit for spiritual ends. The patience, the spirit of faith, the skill and the tact, the readiness to face the uncertainties of a calling which reaches down into the realm of mystery, all this would have value in those men who were to do business in the great waters of spiritual effort.

Jesus would interpret every man's calling in terms of spiritual value while he continues in it, and he would have the man bring out of it the effectiveness consequent upon training and experience to be invested in a service more directly religious. From henceforth the very qualities which had enabled Simon and Andrew to become prosperous fishermen, would enable them to "take men." It is related that one of them

afterward cast a net into the sea of life as it flowed in upon the shores of Judea at the Feast of Pentecost so efficiently as to add to the number of those who were being saved three thousand souls in a single day.

The ready response of these busy men testifies to the fact that "his word was with power." How swiftly the action moves in the account! "They were fishers." "Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me." "They forsook their nets." "They left their father Zebedee in the ship and went after him." At the call of Christ they left something which was not evil but good. Fishing was a legitimate, a useful, a rewarding occupation. But if it stood in the way of a higher form of service, they were ready to yield the less to the greater.

The measure of any evil is not the grossness of it nor the malice expressed in it—the measure of any evil is the amount of good it displaces. And if that which is not in itself evil, a legitimate business, an allowable recreation, an innocent companionship, a wholesome ambition, does nevertheless displace something higher, it is to be sacrificed. If it comes to be a hindrance in the way of Christian growth and usefulness, then it must become subordinate to its superior. The prosperous fishermen forsook all and followed him into a calling of more moment.

But before they left the beach he would have them learn a further lesson in such form that they would never forget it. The fishing the night before had not been good—they had toiled all night and taken nothing. They were discouraged and were reluctant to try again. But Jesus bade them, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets."

It seemed to Christ as he looked these bronzed, weather-beaten men over, without and within, that "they were fishing along the shores of a great opportunity when they might have been doing business in great waters." They were exercising

their ability in the shallows, catching minnows but leaving the larger opportunity unutilized. The use they were making of their privileges was meager and unsatisfying because of a timid unwillingness to undertake the greater task. Therefore he bade them, "Launch out into the deep."

He would have every man take life at deeper levels, make fuller use of each privilege, hitch his wagon to a star, not to the rear car on some noisy elevated train, attempt the larger task which summons the best of his powers into effective action. "Launch out," he cries to all those who hug the shore and haunt the shallows of human experience, living with low aims and meager ideals! His word touches all those finer values in life which are of more worth than all the fish in the sea.

"Launch out into the deep," the voice of wisdom cries! Enter profoundly into the real meaning of these educational facilities. The aim of college training is not to confer a bit of social distinction, or to enable a man to compete more successfully with his untrained fellows in making money, or to bestow a sense of superior culture—the average young American can be trusted to think quite as highly of himself as he ought to think without formal authorization in the shape of a diploma. The aim of education is to develop in every one the sense of personal adequacy to the demands which society may legitimately make upon him and to foster the readiness to respond. Launch out and land that!

The main fault in much of the current religious life is not that it is insincere but that it is superficial. There are thousands of people with a little religious belief—they are not infidels. They would shrink from being classed with the irreligious—they attend church if the day is pleasant and nothing better offers. They have some faint desire to honor God and become mildly useful to their fellows where it does not involve

too much self-sacrifice. But they have never seriously tried to think their way through to a clear, definite Christian faith or to enter into the power and meaning of heartfelt worship or to show themselves resolute in striving to make the principles of the Master bear rule in all the relations of life. They fish too near the shore.

If they would only launch out! If they would only cast aside their supply of "reading matter" which was never worth printing and is not now worth reading, and would strive to know what David and Isaiah, John and Paul and our Lord himself had to say about life and its deeper meanings, what a different note would be heard!

Jesus would have his new-found friends learn something of all this as they face the more exacting responsibilities of spiritual service. And the wondrous draught of fishes secured under his direction became a parable in action. The little dory those men used in fishing almost sank under the weight of the great catch. The hearts of the men sank altogether under the moral impression made. "When Simon Peter saw it, he said, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

We find in Luke a fine sense of discrimination in his use of words. In the other Gospels the body of water which laps the shores of Capernaum and Tiberias is called "the Sea of Galilee." Luke calls it uniformly a "lake." He was a Gentile, more widely traveled, perhaps, and he saves the word "sea" for the Mediterranean, referring to this smaller body of water always as "the Lake of Gennessaret."

He shows the same discrimination in his notice of the words applied to Christ. When Jesus bade Simon launch out, the answer was, "Master, *epistata,* we have toiled all night and taken nothing, nevertheless at thy word I will." Jesus was here a "Master" whose word was to be obeyed. But in the presence of that mysterious manifestation of power summon-

ing him to a searching and exacting form of service, Simon says, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Here his use of the word *Kurios,* Lord, in addressing Jesus denotes another mood and the deeper sense of his own unworthiness.

The latter mood saw farther into the meaning of that situation. Jesus is a "Master" whose precepts are to be obeyed. Jesus is "Lord and Saviour," making men conscious of their unworthiness and then by his redeeming grace lifting them into a sense of peace and of power. This is the mood in which men may launch forth for the accomplishment of unmeasured results.

X

THE MINISTRY OF HEALING

Mark 1: 29-45. Matt. 4: 23-35

It is significant that in the New Testament the Greek word translated in certain passages "to save" is in other passages translated "to heal" or "to make whole." Salvation is wholeness, soundness, completeness of life.

The same Lord forgives iniquities and heals diseases. The same divine energy operates upon the soul and upon the body, now utilizing thoughts and desires, impulses and confidences, now utilizing fresh air and pure water, good food, useful exercise and wise remedies, restoring, upbuilding and completing the entire life according to a purpose steadily beneficent. The Saviour of the soul is known also as "The Great Physician."

It would be inaccurate to speak of a miracle of healing as "a violation of law" or as a piece of magic performed for the amazement of the people. A miracle according to New Testament usage is a result wrought for spiritual ends by divine power according to laws which at present lie outside the field of ordinary experience. In what we call "natural events," we find " a divine purpose moving steadily across the ages, keeping its appointments with foreseen human needs." In those events termed "miraculous" we find this same divine energy now manifesting itself according to methods not comprehended at present by ordinary knowledge and experience.

It would be hard to disentangle the accounts of the healing miracles wrought by Christ from the narrative of his life—the very attempt would all but compel men to banish the Gospels from serious historical consideration.

The occurrences here described are indeed amazing. Jesus himself was an amazing occurrence. His teaching in an atmosphere of perfunctory tradition; his quality of life in an environment of morbid formalism; his impress upon the higher life of the world, fresh, vital, abiding; his redemptive energy finding expression in the recovery of the moral life of millions of men in all lands and times since he appeared—all this to me is more amazing than the opening of blind eyes or the healing of a leper. When I reflect upon the moral reactions which his life produced and is steadily producing, I feel a strong presumption that the great natural order may have had a response to make to him altogether unique. And when I read the sober statements of trustworthy men, some of them eye witnesses of the events described, I am ready to give serious consideration to the claims advanced touching the healing miracles wrought by this unique Personality.

The medical practice at that time was steeped in repulsive nonsense. The record of *materia medica* in that day reads like the recipe for some witch's broth:

> " Eye of newt and toe of frog,
> Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
> Adder's fork and blind worm's sting,
> Lizard's leg and owlet's wing."

It was from such wild and unsavory ingredients that the current practice endeavored to minister to men diseased. It was into an order of procedure defaced by disgusting ignorance that the Master of Life came with his sympathetic touch and his word of power.

"He healed many that were sick of divers diseases"—this is the hard fact which somehow withstands the file of criticism. How did he do it? The final answer to that question is high —we cannot attain unto it. He aimed to secure the co-operation of the expectant hope and confident trust of the patient.

He worked in an atmosphere of sympathy and faith, taking with him into the sickroom Peter and James and John, his trusted intimates, and putting out those who proved a hindrance. When he found himself in an atmosphere of unbelief, "He could do there no mighty work." He added to that widely resident impulse toward recovery, causing the cut finger to heal, the broken bone to knit, the system overloaded with noxious substance to cast it off, the power of his own wise, loving personality. And somehow these energies availed for the recovery of many from their ills.

"Violations of natural law?" Rather the addition of a higher force which altered the possibilities in that situation as men had sensed it! The intelligent man takes an acre of Nevada desert where by the operation of natural law nothing of value grows, and by skillful irrigation and the scattering of a few seeds, he causes it to blossom like the rose. The course of nature had never produced anything there but sagebrush. It might seem to a resident prairie dog that a miracle had been wrought. He might rub his eyes and say, "We never saw it on this fashion." But the result was attained according to law simply by the introduction of a new measure of energy and intelligence. If an ordinary man can thus change "the course of nature" in that barren field, causing the existing order to do what it would not have done but for his approach, what shall we say in the field of human betterment, physical as well as moral, when the Son of God makes his august approach?

In the quiet of the synagogue service at Capernaum, a wild cry suddenly broke upon the ears of the worshipers. There was a man present suffering from one of those maladies plainly nervous or mental in origin and character which the popular diagnosis of that day referred to "possession by a devil." The normal condition of the patient seemed to be overborne by some hostile personality within. "He has a devil," they said.

In the face of mysterious afflictions of a mental or nervous nature, puzzling still to the wisest of physicians, we are not surprised that the people of an earlier day unused to anything like scientific diagnosis should hastily conclude that the sufferer had been overpowered by some hostile influence which they termed demoniacal.

Jesus by the strength and helpfulness of his own wise, loving, restorative personality recovered the unfortunate man to his normal condition. The man writhed and "retched" (to give literal translation to the term used) and then became quiet and self-controlled. And the people witnessing the recovery of this nervous sufferer gave the tribute of their unstinted admiration. "They were all amazed, saying, With authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits and they obey him."

"When they were come out of the *synagogue* they went into the *house* of Simon," where his wife's mother lay sick of a fever. In the Christian *régime* worship stands next door to service. It is never far from the synagogue of aspiration to the home of pain and need. The holy hands which are uplifted in prayer are speedily stretched forth in sympathetic effort. This movement of the Master, so simply recorded, was characteristic of his entire method. It is meant to be a Scripture written for our learning to be read, marked, learned and inwardly digested to the end that the same direct relation may obtain between our mood of worship and our impulse to serve.

The Master took the sick woman by the hand, his very touch a symbol of the healing impact of the divine life upon human ills, and lifted her up. "And immediately," Mark says, without the tedious delay of a long drawn-out convalescence, she arose and participated in the household duties. His word was with power and his touch established the necessary connection between bodily ill and an all-sufficing energy of restoration.

The public act of healing in the synagogue followed by this

deed of mercy in a well-known home brought a flood-tide of interest in this new prophet of Galilee. The enthusiasm of the people was restrained during the day by the fear of breaking the Sabbath, but the Jewish Sabbath ended at sundown. "And at even when the sun did set they brought unto him all that were diseased and them that were possessed with devils and all the city was gathered together at the door."

How familiar is this popular outburst of interest! The unthinking in that land and in this show less interest in the message than in the medicine of religion.

The Master refused to be known solely or mainly as a wonder worker. He withdrew repeatedly from this popular acclaim consequent upon deeds of healing. He charged those who were healed, "See thou say nothing to any man." He discouraged all display of his cures and avoided notoriety. But his policy of silence availed little. The men who were healed published it everywhere and blazed it abroad. "There went out a fame of him and multitudes came to be healed of their infirmities."

He was compelled to rise early in the morning "a great while before day," and depart into a solitary place for prayer. Healing virtue had gone out of him and his strength must be renewed. The sufferings of a crowd induced a heavy drain upon his sympathetic nature. There resulted a depletion which sleep unaided could not restore. There under the quiet stars with the open sky above he waited upon the Father to replenish his spiritual vigor.

When he returned there met him a lone sufferer who had not been able to mingle with the throng around his door the night before. "There came a leper beseeching him and saying, If thou wilt, thou canst." The sick man had complete faith in the power but an imperfect faith in the disposition of Jesus to make him whole. Jesus healed him and sent him to the priests

to make the customary thank-offering for his cleansing both as a means of securing officially a clean bill of health and as a grateful testimony unto God that Christ had made him whole.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine inquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness!"

XI

THE PARALYTIC FORGIVEN AND HEALED

Mark 2: 1-12

"Again he entered into Capernaum after some days and it was noised that he was in the house." And straightway there was no room to receive the people, no, not even for an overflow meeting about the door. The earlier accession of popular interest consequent upon successful acts of healing was here intensified. Jesus used the opportunity it offered not for the further "healing of divers diseases," but for direct spiritual appeal. "He preached the word unto them."

In the midst of his discourse there came a startling interruption. Fragments of the ceiling began to fall upon the heads of his hearers. The blows of a pick vigorously wielded overhead were heard. Presently an opening in the roof appeared. And then through that enlarged opening there was slowly lowered into the room where he stood the body of a paralyzed man. It was an unconventional proceeding for a religious gathering, but it had back of it the impulse of a mighty faith.

The friends of this palsied man had heard of the deeds of healing wrought by this prophet of Galilee. It may have been that these men had personally witnessed such acts, for they were resident in Capernaum. And they had faith. They had tremendous faith! They believed that if their suffering friend could only be brought into the presence of Jesus he would be restored.

They were not to be balked by an array of obstacles. They would not be turned back as they carried the sick man toward the place where Jesus was either by the press of a crowd, too

selfish to give way for a sick man, or by the tough persistence of an oriental roof. It was no easy task to lift the man to the top of the flat-roofed house, but faith and high resolve accomplished it. It was not easy to risk the anger and a claim for damages on the part of the landlord as they dug out a hole sufficient to lower the sick man into the presence of the Master, but faith and resolve leaped all barriers. And now in the midst of the discourse the eyes of pathetic helplessness looked up into the answering eyes of the Son of Man.

"When Jesus saw their faith"—the faith of those friends as they had borne resolute and persistent testimony to it by heroic action—his heart was moved. He was ready to honor this vicarious faith exercised by the four men on behalf of their companion. The faith which one sympathetic soul exercises on behalf of another is not only accounted unto him for righteousness—it becomes efficacious for his needy fellow. We are knit up by our sympathies into a community of interest where the interaction of faith may accomplish wonders.

But the Master seemed to begin remotely making an indirect approach to this palsied man's need. "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." It was not for this that the four friends had made their heroic effort.

Jesus recognized the fact that some diseases have their roots in the moral nature. The malady may have been originally induced by wrongdoing. In such case a new mode of life is demanded for a permanent cure. There must be a new spirit and a new purpose if the recovery of such a sufferer is to be undertaken with hope of success. He therefore addressed himself first to the deeper lack. He brought before the mind of the palsied man a need more vital than that occasioned by crippled limbs—"Son, thy sins!"

"There were certain of the scribes sitting there." They were always there. The presence of the carping critic, himself

powerless to bring relief to the palsied limb or to the guilty heart, may be counted upon until the millennium draws near. "They were reasoning" (literally "dialoguing") "in their hearts." They said: "Blasphemies! Who can forgive sins but God?" Here are the signs of coming conflict! Here are the drops before the shower which will mean, when the storm finally bursts in its full fury, Calvary and the Cross. The opposition of the leaders of the Jewish Church to the messianic claims of Jesus and to the advance of his Kingdom are the most tragic elements in the gospel narrative. How blind they were! The gravest charge which can be laid at the door of the learned Pharisees of that day is that the most significant events in the moral history of the world were taking place before their eyes and they did not see it.

But their accurate sensing of the full implication of his words, as theological experts, enabled them unwittingly to bear their testimony to the divine power and prerogative of our Lord. "Who can forgive sins but God?" No one! If Jesus had been content to be classed as "a good man" or as "one of the prophets" or as "the best moral teacher who ever lived," he would not have provoked that relentless opposition which finally brought the sentence of death. It was his bold statement, "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins," which angered them. Their relentless opposition proves them aware of the claim he made for himself.

Jesus accepted their challenge. He proceeded to establish before their unwilling eyes the validity of his claim in terms which could not be gainsaid. "Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and take up thy bed and walk?" One is as easy to *say* as the other, but to make good the *saying* would be another matter. There was One on earth who could set the palsied man on his feet in sound health and fill his heart with a new sense of

peace. And there before the grateful eyes of the four men who had been exercising their faith for another and in the presence of the carping, dialoguing scribes Jesus wrought his deed of love in the realm of the visible that all might know that his saving power extended with equal efficacy into the realm of unseen values.

He would have been a discredited teacher from that hour in the eyes of friend and foe alike had he failed. But he does not fail. His word here as everywhere was with power. "That ye may know"! The evidential value of those deeds of love is here indicated. The expression of his beneficent energy in works of healing, became an accepted *visé* upon his claim to renew and restore the inner life until it should bear the image of God.

"I say unto thee, Arise." It was his habit to demand from those he would bless the co-operation of their own faith and effort. "Arise!"—the useless muscles had not reacted under the impulse of will for many months! "Take up thy bed"—it seemed a thing impossible! "And go thy way"—was this not the cruel mockery of the man's weakness! But in some way when the palsied man undertook to show the obedience of faith, strength was given him at each successive stage of effort to meet the high summons. He arose and stood erect. He took up his bed while the people sat in breathless astonishment. He walked—the crowd now falling back to make way for this man upon whom the miracle of healing had been wrought. When men undertake to obey the divine summons they are fulfilling their part of the contract. The responsibility then rests with the Omnipotent Author of that initial impulse to empower them to meet his demand.

The Master of life in this telling fashion showed himself thus early in his ministry competent to cope with the entire force and with the dire results of evil in things physical and in

things spiritual. He could heal and he could forgive. He undertakes the entire removal of that ominous growth of evil, root and branch, leaf and Dead Sea fruit, which defaces the garden and embitters the lives of the children of men.

How fitting that these two arms of a common service to human need are thus brought together in a single occurrence! The conjunction is worthy of perpetual reproduction. The pastor who ministers to the moral life, which in turn reacts upon physical health, and the physician who ministers to the body which in turn reacts upon the formation of character, can best work in sympathetic co-operation, each one doing his own work and each one doing it better if he attempts only that for which he is particularly adapted and trained.

The well-rounded cycle of truth in this lesson is apparent also in that it passes easily from that which is less to that which is greatest of all. Physical health is not the supreme good to be sought in life. There was one who had faith in God, a vital and an eminent faith, but he suffered for years from a physical malady which he termed his "thorn in the flesh." He besought the Lord steadily, insistently, devoutly, for its removal but it remained. And by his very disappointment he learned that there are forms of strength which are "made perfect through weakness." He therefore bravely and patiently bore his thorn in the flesh to his grave. He was called Paul and you will find his name written in the annals of Christian history above every name, save only the name of the One whom he served.

The great truth that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins holds the center of the stage in this passage. He has forgiven them. He is forgiving them every day in the year in all the lands of earth. The peace, the joy and the usefulness of all these renewed lives testify to that fundamental fact of experience.

XII

FEASTING AND FASTING

Mark 2: 13-22

The Master had a keen eye for reality. His gaze went through an outward wrapping of forms like the Roentgen ray. He saw the inner structure— or the lack of it—in an individual or in a system. He recognized the weakness of the hollow forms to which Pharisees were devoted, and he said boldly that publicans and harlots would go into the Kingdom ahead of such religionists—they stood nearer the front in the moral procession.

Here he follows up that statement by actually choosing one of the hated class to be his disciple. "He saw a man named Levi sitting at the receipt of custom and said unto him, Follow me." The identity of "Levi" and "Matthew" seems evident. Many a man bore two names. Levi is not named in any list of the Twelve while Matthew is named in them all. "Levi the tax collector" and "Matthew the publican" are without question the same. It was a brave act for Jesus to give this mark of recognition to a hated class by calling one of its worthier members to be his personal disciple.

There were two sorts of publicans or tax collectors, those who collected the income tax and those who were customs officials. The latter were the more hated as their office gave them the greater opportunity for extortion. Matthew belonged to the latter class and Jesus therefore braved the strongest popular condemnation.

Then with further disregard for the current prejudice he sat at meat with the hated class. "Jesus sat at meat in his

(Matthew's) house and many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples." This social recognition was most offensive as is the occasional act of table hospitality between the two races in a great section of our own country. It seems to imply social equality which one race is not ready to grant. The word of exclusion from "The Merchant of Venice" is still in force: "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you. But I will not eat with you, drink with you or pray with you." When Jesus ate and drank with publicans and sinners it was a grievous affront to the popular prejudice.

He justified his course by saying: "I am a physician. I go where my patients are. I put myself in touch with them as a practicing physician must and for a kindred purpose." And then he added with a fine mingling of humor and of sarcasm: "They that are *whole* have no need of the physician but they that are sick. I came not to call the *righteous* but sinners to repentance!"

How delicious is the gentle scorn heaped upon their complacency in those words of rebuke. "They that are *whole*"—and there they stood before him crippled and disfigured by the moral maladies they suffered. "Have no *need*"—the scribes themselves would have said so but as we look upon them now, where can we find such spiritual destitution? "I came not to call the *righteous*"—and as the words fell from his lips, we can almost see a smile of reproach as he reflected upon their sorry lack of righteousness. He knew what was in man. He utilized the various elements of human speech. And here the element of humor and of irony finds place in making his rebuke effective.

"Why do thy disciples fast not?" It was the practice of his disciples rather than his own habit which the Pharisees criticised. It may be that Jesus conformed, feeling that it was

becoming to fulfill all the righteousness of the religious method in which he had been brought up. But under the influence of the principles he taught his followers were already claiming for themselves a fuller measure of spiritual liberty. They were placing a more distinct and a more exclusive emphasis upon things vital.

Jesus replied by saying that the present mood of the disciples in the newfound joy of their spiritual alliance with him did not prompt fasting. They could not fast while the Bridegroom was with them. He would have religious observances fraught with meaning and genuineness or he would not have them at all. To fast or to feast because a certain hour had come in the ecclesiastical calendar seemed to the Master meaningless. He would have the fast or the feast marked by reality as expressing the dominant mood and ministering nurture to some definite purpose. "The days will come!" And when they come let the religious observance match the need they bring.

He thus lifts the practice of his disciples above the mechanism of religious observance. He lays a foundation for that liberty indicated in the letter to the Colossians. "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon or of the Sabbath." The spirit of the inner life must rule rather than the letter of some hard and fast *régime*.

The Master used two illustrations in which the same element of quiet humor is manifest. He pictured the incongruity of putting a new patch on an old garment. The old would be too badly worn to retain the stitches binding the new in place, and when the patch was inevitably torn away the rent would be worse.

It is a homely picture of the folly of taking some fragment of observance away from its connections where it has some

value and endeavoring to join it with that where there is no essential agreement. The hard and fast system of the Pharisees would not serve as a garment to which the new spiritual liberty which Jesus came to confer might be linked. The new life would demand a new setting.

It may be well to remember in this connection that no fragment of exemption from the stricter rules of religious observance can rightly be claimed—it must be taken as a component part of a new mode of life. There are many who are eager to free themselves from the letter of Sabbath observance, for example, who have not by any means entered into the more exacting liberty of the Spirit. If the new patch is to be taken the entire new garment of a finer type of righteousness springing from a law deep written in the heart must go with it, else the bit of liberty will be abused.

Jesus added the further illustration of the folly of pouring new wine, exhaling gases during its period of fermentation, into old wine skins. Where the skin was old the fermentation and the clarifying process through which the new wine would pass as it matured would rend the skins; and that would mean the loss of everything.

The molds in which the new life flows must be adequate. "If Jesus were to put his new vital force into the enfeebled Jewish order, something would break. New ways for new powers. The free life must have its own modes. Fasting as an act of religion belongs to the old order of outwardness and routine, not to the new kingdom of the spirit. The new movement of life wants other forms of expression."

The times on which we have fallen have need of such a word. New wine is flowing from the press these days. The social interest which occupies so large a part of the world's mind, and the social sympathy which has such a profound hold upon the world's heart, and the social energy which ab-

sorbs so much of the strength of the world's right arm are the new wine of the Kingdom of God. This wine is making glad the hearts of many whose zest over the cultivation of an altogether private and personal piety had begun to wane.

This new form of Christian impulse will demand new modes of expression. It cannot be contained in the old vessels. If the desire to serve on the part of the morally ardent young men of the land is to be kept without loss and used for what it is really worth new wine skins must be forthcoming without delay.

One reason why many a young college fellow with unselfish heart and devoted spirit does not turn to the Christian ministry, as would have been the case a quarter of a century ago, is that the idea of preaching to a small section of a small town already overchurched where half a dozen of his compeers struggle together for the attendance and the support of a meager constituency, does not summon the best he has into action. Give him the challenge of a man's job for his moral powers and he will show himself as ready as was Hobson at Santiago.

If the Christian men of a congregation are not asked to do anything more than to pay the pew rent and hold up the other side of the hymn-book while their wives and daughters read the responses and sing God's praise in their gentler soprano, with a bare handful of men serving as trustees, deacons and ushers, then we can understand why church life may seem to them scarcely worth while.

But if the new wine of Christian impulse, strongly flavored as it is with social interest, may find new receptacles there is hope. Let it be given to the elevation of civic life; to the introduction of a more democratic spirit into the control of industry; to the securing of a more equitable distribution of the joint product of hands and brains among those who con-

tributed to the net result. Let men go down to their shops and stores, their factories and mines, their railroads and steamships, saying, "The kingdom of God must come here; the great ideals of Christian brotherhood must be realized here in terms of economic life." Then the new wine of Christian impulse will be preserved and all these forms of activity will receive the inspiration of a finer content. The new movements of life, now in the stage of fermentation and on their way toward clarification, must have their own appropriate modes of expression.

XIII

THE VISIT TO NAZARETH

Luke 4: 16-30

"He came to Nazareth where he had been brought up." He would ascertain whether "a prophet mighty in deed and in word" would be without honor in his own country. It would be a test not so much of the prophet as of the country. If any country fails to honor the One whose name has been written by the ages above every name it dishonors itself.

He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath "as his custom was." He was always there when the day came. It was a way he had and during the thirty formative years which led up to his public service the steady impress of that habit of worship contributed mightily to the development which enabled him to say, "I am the way."

Habits are sometimes heavy, troublesome chains—they are sometimes the best of friends. When certain wholesome actions have been repeated until they become automatic the mind and the will are left free to deal with other problems. Progress in character is marked by the gradual transfer of important lines of action from the realm of discussion and conscious decision to the realm of established custom. The great fundamental verities of right living should not remain open questions to be weighed pro and con in the face of every fresh situation. The committing of certain valued interests to habits which have vindicated their worth by long and widespread tests becomes the act of moral wisdom.

Jesus participated in the service of worship. He was no silent, passive partner in the august transactions there con-

ducted between a world unseen and a clearly recognized world of human needs. He would sing; he would pray; he would have his share in the reading of holy Scripture. There was delivered unto him the ancient roll of the prophet Isaiah and he stood up to read.

The passage selected was most significant. Is there in all the Old Testament a single verse which more completely suggests the main *motif* of his ministry? He would not emphasize the fact that upon occasion he could meet the world's hunger with a generous supply of loaves and fishes. He would not make conspicuous his ability to heal all our diseases. His great purpose is here declared to be one of personal moral renewal and of social reconstruction that every life might have its full chance to be a life.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me"—this is the simple, accurate, sufficing account of the initial impulse which underlay his ministry, making it efficient. This was the first sentence of his first real sermon delivered there in his old home. His sense of the presence of God in his own heart, his unbroken consciousness of co-operation with the Infinite Spirit enabled him to "do always those things which please Him." The Spirit of the Lord was within him making there in human terms the supreme manifestation in history of the abiding character of the Eternal.

He also struck clearly and firmly the note of social regeneration. "He hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captive and to set at liberty them that are bruised." His total energy was pledged to the large task of human reclamation.

"This day this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears"—the great result foretold at the time of the Captivity was now in process of realization. Jesus was building his own work

solidly into the highest spiritual expectations of his own race. He did not come to destroy nor to surrender one jot or one tittle of the best they had seen and felt and hoped for—he came rather to fill it full. And as he unfolded the magnificent implications of those words of hope from the book of Isaiah the people wondered and rejoiced over the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.

But there came presently a change in their mood. He was one of their own boys. He had played in their streets; he had been taught in their schools. "Is not this Joseph's son?" they said, and Joseph was only a carpenter down street. Their eyes were holden and they were unable to recognize the divine in that which was near and familiar. It is not the only occasion when the undiscerning were entertaining angels unawares, awaking to their high privilege only too late.

When Benjamin Franklin first appeared in his homely garb at the courts of Europe the superficial observers were ready with a sneer, "Is not this the Philadelphia printer?" They learned presently that a philosopher and a statesman had appeared upon the scene. When the hard crisis of the Civil War came upon us and the one man, so far as we can now see in the light of the terrible experiences of those days, was in the providence of God placed in command, the undiscerning said, "Is not this the rail-splitter?" When the present Chancellor of the Exchequer in England first rose into prominence as a political leader there were carping critics who remarked, "Is not this the Welsh lay preacher?" The inability to recognize the splendid and abiding worth of that which may be found in a simple setting is not confined to the little company gathered that day in the synagogue at Nazareth.

In that critical mood they challenged him, "What we have heard done in Capernaum, do here." Even though gracious words had proceeded out of his mouth they taunted him with

the fact that he had not healed the sick in Nazareth. The easy challenge of unbelief that miracles be worked to order for its confounding is altogether common.

Then Jesus answered them out of their own history showing that the mercy of God had been steadily carrying on a work of relief at outstations. The needy woman of Sarepta in pagan Sidon had been relieved by the prophet Elijah when "many widows in Israel" remained famine stricken. Naaman the Syrian, a worshiper in the house of Rimmon, rather than in that place where Jehovah had caused his honor to dwell, was healed by Elisha to the apparent neglect of "many lepers in Israel." And here again the divine compassion had found expression and acceptance in those remote places which the orthodox people of Nazareth viewed with contempt.

Instead of rejoicing in these overflows of the divine mercy "they were filled with wrath." They rose up and thrust him out of the city for telling them these plain truths. They crowded him toward the brow of the hill that they might if possible cast him over the ledge. Unless the sectarian name which they bore was blown in the bottle which conveyed the water of life they would not drink it. The prejuidce aroused by these references to the fact that other communities had been blinded by their unbelief to the point where they had failed to avail themselves of blessings within reach, even as the men of Nazareth were doing at that hour, stirred their hatred and the gracious words which had proceeded out of his mouth were all forgotten. They rose up in their blind rage and made complete their rejection of the Master's timely message.

It was a rejection which "struck home" in the fullest sense of that familiar phrase. The region of Galilee was on the whole more hospitable to his teaching than Pharisee-ridden Judea, but here in his own little Nazareth nestling among those Galilean hills, he was cast out of the synagogue. His

visit to Nazareth shed no glory on the little town—it was a day of judgment for Nazareth and the place stood condemned by its own blind conceit. "He came unto his own" and, to their lasting discredit, "his own received him not."

But his rejection by those who ought most readily to have accepted him was not exceptional. It is one of the pathetic sights in every community that children reared in homes of tender and beautiful piety deny the whole family tradition and develop into selfish worldlings. The accumulated spiritual capital which they have received by inheritance may save them from lines of life morally disreputable, but they add nothing to the spiritual forces of the communities where they dwell. When converts visit us from non-Christian lands they stand amazed at the number of people who, walking in the full light of spiritual privilege which has been ours for centuries, find nothing better for themselves than the hard, thin life of ungodliness.

When any man reads Harold Begbie's "Other Sheep" with its new chapters in "the book of Acts" declaring the wonderful victories won by souls less favorably placed than was the woman of Sarepta or Naaman, the Syrian, he feels himself smitten with a great reproach. The souls that walked in darkness "followed the gleam" and now they rejoice in a vision of light where there is no darkness at all. They joyously engage in a service crowned with glory and honor. "If the mighty works which were done in you had been done" in the Tamil country or in Shansi, now may we say in our humiliation, what wonders of response might not the world have witnessed!

How difficult it is to recognize the real greatness of great things when they are seen at close range! The Matterhorn is greater from Gorner Grat than from the Schwart See which lies at the very foot of the awful peak. The Son of

Man wears now a halo placed there by the grateful recognition and adoration of nineteen centuries, but to the people in whose streets he had grown up he was only "the carpenter's son." The mighty acts of the divine spirit in our own day bringing down out of heaven from God that better order of life whose beauty will shine forth like the sun in its strength are likewise too near and familiar to be rightly judged. O Lord open thou our eyes that we may see and believe and obey!

XIV

THE TWELVE MEN

Mark 3: 7-19. Matt. 10: 1-7

"He ordained twelve that they should be with him and that he might send them forth." He wrote no book. He arranged no stately ceremonial. He gave the barest hints as to organization. He staked the entire future of his cause upon the work of twelve men who had been "with him" until they were saturated with his spirit and were competent to be "sent forth" to reproduce the quality of his life in the service they could render.

When he set about the task of promulgating a religion he did not therefore prepare an elaborate treatise on the subject. He gathered these intimates about him breathing upon them the breath of his own life as he said, "Receive ye the Spirit." "As the Father hath sent me, I send you." The only way to reveal a person is through a person. The Father revealed himself through the Son and the Son manifests himself to the world through lives which reproduce his spirit.

He was a true vine and he put forth branches, projections and utterances of his own life. He put forth twelve, and then seventy, and then three thousand that his work might bear fruit. This was his chosen method of perpetuating his influence in the world and of bringing men to the Father. "He that receiveth you," he said to them, "receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." The whole way between sinful men and the merciful Father was to be bridged by consecrated flesh and blood.

He chose twelve because every Hebrew would recognize in-

stantly that this meant a new Israel, a new kingdom in which the whole race would be blessed, a New Jerusalem into which all the nations of earth would bring their glory and their honor. The number twelve was like a thought-form to the patriotic Hebrew. He pictured the Kingdom of God as having twelve sections.

The Master chose for the most part outdoor men accustomed to deal with things and persons rather than with words and abstract ideas. They would have a keen, vivid sense of reality. They were strong in their individuality—we find nothing of that smooth monotony commonly apparent where objects are counted off by dozens. The fresh, incisive account of the way these twelve men followed one Lord but each upon his own two feet and with his own particular gait and style holds our interest throughout.

When we follow the development of these twelve men they do not give us the impression of a well-drilled company of unvarying angels or of the well-cast colossal statues to be found under the dome of St. Peters—they are twelve natural genuine, clear-cut men, out of whom even the weight of their incomparable training did not iron the tucks and wrinkles of sharply defined personality. They followed the Master not in the weak, servile imitation of the letter but in the fine, spontaneous freedom of the spirit.

PETER stands first in each of the lists given us in the synoptic Gospels. He usually came first whatever was on—his ardent, impulsive nature brought him to the front. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," he cries when he first meets Jesus, as if thrusting away his hope of salvation. "Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," he says later, clinging more closely than all the rest. "Thou shall never wash my feet," he protests, reluctant and ashamed when the Master proffers that lowly service.

Then a moment later at the prospect of failing to enjoy a certain form of fellowship with Christ he breaks in, "Lord, not my feet but my hands and my head."

"Though all men should deny thee, yet I never will," was his ready boast that fateful night when the possibility of wavering loyalty was suggested. "I know not the man," he protested with an oath, before the cock crew. Everywhere the same impulsive, impetous vigor, now good, now bad, but always intense. Yet when that eager, impulsive, uncertain nature was fully mastered by the divine Spirit, when it was brought under the powerful sway of an abiding relation to the Saviour, that life became indeed "a rock" of strength enabling its possessor to follow loyally even unto death.

THOMAS is the very opposite of Peter. They stood poles apart. Thomas had a melancholy, despondent temperament. His three recorded sayings are all characteristic. "Let us also go that we may die with him." "Lord, we know not whither thou goest and how can we know the way?" "Except I see in his hands the print of the nails I will not believe." His was a somber nature, looking habitually on the dark side, well-nigh color blind to all tints save the deep navy blue.

Jesus did not meet his uncertainty and fear with rebuke. He met him with evidence and sympathy and kindly instruction. "Thomas, reach hither thy finger." And when patience, guidance and kindly fellowship had done their appointed work, this groping soul was enabled at last to cry in joyous recognition of what his inner life craved, "My Lord and my God!"

PHILIP had a sluggish, calculating, practical disposition. "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." The facts are there carefully set out as in a trial balance. How different from the eager cry of Andrew—"We have found the Messiah." In the presence of the hungry multitude, "Jesus

said to Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Philip, bookkeeper-like, went off instantly into a mental calculation as to the probable cost of the requisite food. "Two hundred pennyworth," he said presently, "would not suffice if every one of them would take a little." Everywhere a prosaic, unimaginative man, lacking in vision and enthusiasm!

But these cautious, practical men are very useful when we are dealing with the financial aspects of religious work. They add up well on the "Committee of Ways and Means," even though their spiritual enthusiasm never carries them quite up into the third heaven. They have a way of telling us with clear-eyed, hard-headed sagacity what ought to be done next. In a "great house" there are vessels of gold and of silver, and also of wood and of earth; and there is a large place of usefulness for practical men.

JOHN has sometimes been pictured as gentle, quiet, tender, almost effeminate. He has quite another look in the Scriptures. He was "a son of Thunder," capable of that which is electric, startling, powerful. There was something hot and terrible in his early temperament—he it was, not Peter nor Judas, who wanted to call down fire and burn up the Samaritan village which refused entertainment to the Master. His very intensity of soul made him narrow—"Master, we saw one casting out devils and we forbade him because he followed not with us." He was not conspicuous for modesty—he was one of the two who wanted to sit on the right and the left hand of the Lord in his Kingdom. They made the confident boast that they could drink his cup and be baptized with his baptism.

But this man, bold, self-confident, ambitious, intense, affectionate, was tamed, softened, subdued, by a long and notable Christian life, and what a nature his became! He seemed at last to see into the very heart of Christ. His ultimate hope

and his open vision of God's love are well voiced in those words, "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

JAMES is never represented as speaking for himself—not a recorded word of his appears anywhere in the New Testament. He is not the James of the Epistle. Nevertheless he seems to have been one of the three closest companions of our Lord. Into the place of death in the home of Jairus, into the glory of the Mount of Transfiguration, into the farther depths of the Garden or Gethsemane, "Jesus took with him, Peter and James and John"—always those three!

The untold possibilities of quiet strength are here suggested in that the silent James is thus honored by his Master and given a place within that inner circle of friends.

The choice of MATTHEW seemed to fly in the face of popular prejudice and to cast aside all maxims of expediency. Matthew was a publican, a tax collector. The people hated all such; they linked the name "publican" with the lowest terms they had—"publicans and sinners," "publicans and harlots," "a heathen man and a publican"! So their phrases ran! His selection by the Master was surely "a venture of faith."

But Christ habitually put the leaven down into the meal where it was fairly hidden by the task imposed upon it. He came not to call the righteous but men who had missed the mark.

Space would fail me to speak of Andrew and Thaddeus and Simon the Canaanite. But there is the last name in the list, JUDAS ISCARIOT! Why was he chosen? Was he false from the first? We know all the stock questions. His selection seems another and here an unsuccessful venture of faith. He was mercenary; he was two-faced; he placed himself in touch with the forces of evil at a great crisis and experienced a tragic downfall. He had his chance to gain holy character along with Peter and James and John. But even the gracious

companionship of Jesus himself did not make his salvation inevitable. Take heed therefore how ye stand and where ye stand lest ye fall!

When we mount these snapshots of the twelve men, how varied they are! How wide is the hospitality of the Kingdom! Somewhere in the fellowship and service of the Son of Man there is room for every sort of temperament, for every type of man. The only test of discipleship is the one he named, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another."

XV

THE REAL SOURCES OF HAPPINESS

Matt. 5-12

The Master gave his first address in a little synagogue at Nazareth. He appeared later at the larger Temple in Jerusalem. In this lesson he stands on a hillside under the open sky. He enlarged his audience room as his own vision widened.

He went into the open not merely because the outdoors was larger than the indoors—he went because the people were there. "Seeing the multitudes he went up into a mountain and opened his mouth and taught them." His message was called out by the appeal of life. It was framed up in the immediate presence of life. It bore directly, every line of it, on some real problem of human life.

"Seeing the multitudes" as one who knew what was in man would see them! He knew their hopes and their fears, their sorrows and their sins, their broken plans and their burdens of disappointment. He saw it all with sympathetic understanding, and the very sight of it opened his mouth that he might teach them something of abiding worth.

He saw that they were looking everywhere for happiness. It is "what all the world's a-seeking." Jesus honored that quest by making the first word in his Charter Day Address the word "Happy" or "Blessed," as it is commonly translated. But the misguided people were looking in the wrong place. They were looking outside when they should have had their eyes turned within.

We see their mistaken successors engaged in the same ill-

directed quest. "Happy are they that have good bank accounts," men say. But the bank account replies, "It is not in me to yield unfailing happiness." "Happy are they that have university degrees making them intelligent and cultured," men say. But the college diploma says, "It is not in me." "Happy are they who are successful, who have their names written in 'Who's Who.'" But what the world calls "Success" replies, "It is not in me."

Jesus therefore in his first sentence faced them about. Happy are they that are gentle, merciful, pure-hearted and aspiring. Happy are they that hunger and thirst after a higher life. Happy are they who make peace and pursue it. The outside things are but the tools and machinery—they are all secondary. The inner qualities of mind and heart alone are primary. Jesus therefore said in effect in this great address, "If you would be deeply and permanently happy, seek for your happiness within."

"Blessed are the poor in spirit"—not the men who crawl but the men conscious and mindful of their spiritual necessities. They seek the divine forgiveness and renewal that with an enduement of power from above they may live. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs not to those who "say they are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing"—it belongs to those who are "poor in spirit," mindful of their lack, whose compelling claim upon the divine abundance is that they "hunger and thirst after righteousness." Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven and they shall be filled with satisfactions which never perish.

"Blessed are they that mourn." Does this put a premium on sorrow? Is mourning a thing to be desired? Blessed are they who have the capacity for grief, for sympathy and tenderness in the presence of any occasion for sorrow. The occasions come inevitably. In the course of time the fathers and

the mothers of earth all die. Then the children who have loved and cherished their parents suffer grief. The children who have grown hard, careless, indifferent are secretly glad that the old people are finally out of the way so that they can enter upon the full enjoyment of the estate. Blessed are the children who can and do mourn!

The man who walks through a city with open eyes sees pain and poverty, sin and suffering. There wells up in his soul a great compassion and sympathy. Out of that mood is born a desire and a purpose to do something to relieve that need.

There are those who pass through the same city thinking mainly of their ribbons and laces, their teas and their dinners, their clubs and their games, their light-hearted jests and their jolly good times—they are not saddened by the thought of what lies groaning and travailing in pain. Blessed are they that can and do mourn over the world's need. The silly, shallow, light-hearted nature has neither the normal capacity for sorrow nor the clear prospect for comfort. Thank God for your capacity to feel grief, know sorrow, cherish sympathy, for you will be comforted.

"Blessed are the *gentle*"—this rather than "meek" is the more accurate translation. "They shall inherit the earth." The word is being fulfilled before our eyes. It has been pointed out by Charles F. Dole that the fierce, cruel, bloodthirsty animals and the huge, awful monsters which at a still earlier day possessed the earth, are vanishing. They have given place to a gentler type of life. Even the wolves, the bears and the lions are becoming scarce—one must pay money or travel far afield to see them.

The gentle animals, the sheep, the cows and the horses are inheriting the earth's space and the earth's food. They are on the increase. They have shown themselves more useful than have the fiercer animals; and as the ages come and go

the principle of utility determines the issue. The useful inherit the earth.

The fierce, brutish, savage men are giving way before men of intelligence and character. And the men of cruel, selfish intelligence will more and more go down before the march of men possessed of humane and philanthropic spirit. The centuries are committing the main interests of earth not to the Turks, the Thibetans or the cannibals of the South Seas, but to those nations which are humane in spirit. The premium is upon the spirit of humanity—it will ultimately have the field to itself. The process demands time—Jesus said "inherit the earth," not possess it at once. When the returns are fully in, it will be seen that the humane races have come to possess the earth. Blessed are the gentlemen and the gentlewomen!

"Blessed are the peacemakers"—not those who never fight but those whose work lays secure the foundation for lasting peace. The hard necessity for fighting, unsought but unavoidable, is sometimes laid upon those who love peace and pursue it. It is the temper and quality of the underlying abiding purpose which Jesus here names and exalts.

General Grant was a soldier by profession but a great peacemaker. The four brief words upon his tomb yonder by the Hudson, "Let us have peace," are most fitting. In the terms he offered General Lee at Appomattox, in his suggestion that the Southern soldiers keep their horses because "they would be needed for the spring plowing," in his whole bearing in that momentous hour of victory, he was beating swords into plowshares. He was changing the destructive temper of the country into a productive one. Blessed are those who habitually make peace.

The Prince of Peace bore the name of the greatest soldier of his race. The name of "Jesus" is but the Greek form of the Hebrew "Joshua." Into the presence of evil he brought

"not peace but a sword." He thrust hard at the enemies of the divine purpose until in their rage they turned upon him and nailed him to a cross.

But he was none the less the greatest peacemaker in history. He broke the strength of moral opposition by his own attack. The quality of his redemptive service was such that he laid foundations for enduring peace. He is taking the moral government of the world upon his shoulders as none other ever has and the day is hastening when all the kingdoms of this world will have learned to live together in the spirit of an inclusive humanity. Blessed are those whose purposes even though they stretch through fields of struggle look ever toward a settled peace—"they shall be called the sons of God."

"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." By purity of intention and through lives of devotion they gain the faculties requisite for spiritual perception. They "see God" because they have within their own spiritual composition something to see him with.

The pure in heart see God not because they find themselves more advantageously placed in some altered situation consequent upon a day of judgment. They see him wherever they may be because the organ of spiritual recognition has come to that full capacity consequent upon purity of heart.

"Eye hath not seen"—it does not come through physical sensation as Robertson pointed out. "Ear hath not heard"—it does not come by hearsay. "Neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love him"—the unaided imagination finds itself equally helpless.

It is not because the things which God has prepared are so much more imposing and brilliant than all that our eyes and our ears and our imaginations have brought to us. It is because spiritual values are spiritually discerned. God reveals

them unto us by his Spirit. The pure in heart behold him not as an ultimate reward for their purity but as a result of it here and now. They see him as he is and become like him because they reflect as in a mirror the glory of the Lord.

The outward circumstances of the life may be simple or stately, but in either case the traits of character outlined in these Beatitudes become abiding sources of happiness to the possessors of those qualities. If we go forth to meet the facts of life in the high mood here suggested, there will come the inevitable reaction. Our lives will be filled with righteousness; we shall obtain mercy; we shall possess the Kingdom; we shall be called the children of God; and we shall see God.

XVI

THE LAW OF LOVE

Luke 6: 27-38

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies." When the parson reads a passage like that the practical man as a rule has his answer all ready. "It can't be done. It isn't a reasonable proposition," he says. He feels more sympathy with the moral program suggested by Huxley and indorsed by David Harum. "Love your friends and hate your enemies. Do unto others as they do unto you—and do it first."

This has a rough show of justice on the face of it. It seems to certain minds more manly and less sentimental. But there stands the word of Christ, "Love your enemies."

Then as if that were not enough, he went ahead piling it on. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you. Resist not evil. If any man takes away your coat give him your overcoat also. If he compels you to go a mile with him, go two miles. If he smites you on one cheek, offer him the other. Give to every one that asketh thee. And from him that would borrow—this seems the very climax of unreasonable sentiment—turn not away!

What would be the result of taking these commands seriously and literally? "Resist not evil"—it would wipe all the policemen off the slate. "Love your enemies"—what then shall we do for our friends who deserve something better at our hands than do the enemies? "Give to every one that asketh thee"—it would fill the streets with able-bodied beggars. The wills of many would go lame at once. Where a living can be had for the asking there are many who will at once

go into the asking business. "From him that would borrow turn not thou away"—this seems to cut the ground from under the feet of prudent thrift and turn it over as a prey to the shiftless. What an impossible program!

If we face these commands in broad daylight without flinching or pretense, we can understand why Tolstoi when he undertook to practice a literal obedience to the command, "Resist not evil" was adjudged by many as insane. The Russian government allowed his writings to circulate when other similar writings were suppressed. The officials said, "He is a madman anyway and the people will not take him seriously."

But there stands the word of the Master. He was no half-wild enthusiast. He saw clearly, thought deeply, lived divinely. Is he then discredited by these commands or are we? Was he an impossible, abstract idealist hitching his wagon to a star but with no wheels on it enabling it to move across this common earth and render useful service? Are these words meant to be taken at their full face value?

In the Greek Testament two different words are used for the sentiment we call "love." There was the more general love of an intelligent good will. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "He loveth our nation and hath built for us a synagogue." "By this shall men know that ye are my disciples if ye love one another." "God so loved the world." This was the "love" to be shown toward an enemy—it was not the love of ardent affection but the love of an intelligent good will.

Then there was the other Greek word, expressing an intimate personal affection. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." "Simon, lovest thou me? Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." When Jesus stood at the grave of Lazarus weeping, the Jews said, "Behold, how

he loved him." Here is that more intimate personal affection, but we are not commanded to have this feeling for our enemies.

Yet even so, it is to be no idle sentiment lying inert in the heart. It must find expression. "Do good to them that hate you"—you must act the part. "Bless them that curse you"—your bearing must be kindly even in the face of a moral northeaster. "And pray"—this is the hardest test of all for in that quarter where no successful pretense is possible we must give expression to our undefeated good will—"pray for them who despitefully use you." It is a hard saying any way we take it.

We shall find help in the interpretation of this passage from the principle discussed by the late William Newton Clarke in his last book, "The Ideals of Jesus." The principle is this: Let your own better nature determine your action in any given situation rather than allow it to be determined by the evil doing of others. Do not allow the evil in others to rule your action —let the best that is in you decide. And Jesus after the manner of the Orient put this sound principle in the bold paradoxes found in this lesson.

How that principle lights up this entire passage! When some man strikes you a blow you are not to strike back. If there is to be a second blow let it be struck by him on your other cheek rather than by you in the spirit of retaliation. When some man wrongfully compels you to go a mile with him, if there is to be any further expenditure of energy let it be in going another mile, rendering him some further service, rather than in taking vengeance for the wrong already done.

You are to live out uniformly the generous temper, giving to every one who asks. You do not always give the thing asked—you may give rather the thing needed as wise parents do with their children. When you do not give money, you give interest, sympathy, friendship, personal help which may be of

more worth than silver and gold. In every case your action is to be determined by the demands of your own best self.

Jesus grounded this mode of life in the universal moral order. "Do this," he says, "that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." God is not forever bent on immediate retaliation. His action is determined from within—it springs from the depths of his own moral nature. He pursues the even tenor of his way in certain vast and stable cosmic habits, sending the sunshine and the rain quite impartially. And when he punishes the evildoer the discipline also is suggested and alloted according to an abiding moral purpose in the heart of an Infinite Father.

Therefore when we allow our actions to be determined from within by our own better natures rather than by the provocation offered by men of ill will about us, we become in spirit and in method "the children of our Father who is in heaven."

Here is the sublime end which the whole process of spiritual nurture has in view! "I will write my laws," not across the face of the sky, nor on tables of stone, nor in the lines of action prompted by the evil doing of others. "I will write my laws upon their hearts and I will put my truth in the inward parts." The purpose which God has in mind is the gradual development of steadfast, dependable moral personality within, to which all the interests of conduct may be safely committed. The special action suited to each situation may then be left to the high determinations of that inner life. Out of your own heart are the issues of life and not from the chance provocations of those who may act as your enemies.

We become morally free and spiritually efficient only as we rise above petty rules and maxims made to fit special occasions. We become morally free only as we rise above the

current practices of society as shrewdly voiced by some Huxley or David Harum. We become morally free only as we rise above the provocations offered by men of ill will and come to have our own standards of action within. "Where the spirit of the Lord is," where he has actually put the content of his moral message, the net result of his spiritual nurture, "there is liberty," and nowhere else. "Ye shall know the truth" by the intellectual perception of it and by experiencing its power to renew the heart, "and the truth shall make you free."

It is the way he trod who uttered these high commands. He had enemies and he loved them. When a Samaritan village refused him hospitality his disciples wanted to call down fire from heaven and burn it up. But he said patiently: "Ye know not what spirit ye are of. The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." His action was determined not by the rude response of the little village to his request for a night's lodging but by his own moral nature.

When men despitefully used him, hanging him upon a cross between two thieves, he prayed for them. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." His word, "Love your enemies, and pray for them that despitefully use you," was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth. His mode of action throughout was determined from within his own heart of compassion. He dealt with men not according to their immediate deserts but according to their needs and according to the redemptive purpose he cherished on their behalf. And because he furnished his own high standards of action his life became morally efficacious beyond any other life in history.

Beautiful are the reactions which come inevitably and ceaselessly from this mode of life. "Forgive and ye shall be forgiven. If ye forgive men their trespasses your Heavenly Father will also forgive you your trespasses." The world will

never leave off quoting the tribute paid to that high quality by the master of English expression. It has learned his stately words by heart.

"The quality of mercy is not strained.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.
. . . . . .
It is an attribute of God himself.
. . . . . .
We do pray for mercy
And that same prayer doth teach us all
To render deeds of mercy."

XVII

THE OLD LAW AND THE NEW LIFE

Matt. 5: 17-26

It was the Master's way to gather up the fragments which remained from older systems about to be superseded by the bounty of his own teaching that nothing should be lost. He would not destroy the dotting of an *i* or the crossing of a *t* in the old law—he would supplement its lack and bring it to completion. "I came not to destroy but to fulfill."

The rôle of the iconoclast is not difficult—it is easy, like that of the bull in the china shop and oftentimes as futile. The task of the man who would patiently conserve the values in efforts confessedly imperfect and carry on the work of vital fulfillment is higher and harder—and incomparably more rewarding.

In the critical treatment of the Bible, where the untenable views of literal inerrancy have been handled without gloves; in the radical criticism of the existing social order where the spirit of competition as a source of motive has been given no quarter; in the harsh scrutiny of public men and public measures where the righteous intents have sometimes been slain with the wicked by withering condemnation not unlike that which fell upon Sodom, it has seemed to some men of more patient temper that the work of destruction has proceeded quite far enough—that the common interest might now be better served by men whose joy it is "not to destroy but to fulfill."

The Master indicated with unsparing candor the defective quality of the current morality. "Except your righteousness

exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Their righteousness was altogether too external. It busied itself with small matters like the tithing of pepper and salt and mustard to the neglect of the weightier matters of justice, mercy and truth. It also lacked the spontaneity of that joyous obedience which springs from a sense of filial relationship to the Father.

The Scribes and Pharisees, taking them by and large, were not bad men. There were "blind guides and whited sepulchres," "hypocrites and serpents," among them, but they would have averaged much higher than this characterization might indicate. The glaring defect lay in their system—they were intent on keeping rules; they sought to "pay their way" with the Lord by proper attention to outward observance while their hearts remained far from that loving, joyous obedience consequent upon genuine sonship in the divine family.

It is impossible to produce a gentleman or a lady by painstaking attention to minute rules of etiquette in some book of deportment. Even though that studied politeness exceeds the scheme of decorum outlined in "Answers to Correspondents" in some widely read journal, the result is but a mechanical attention to certain moves in the game stopping far short of genuine good breeding. True politeness can only spring from thoughtful, genuine, unselfish consideration for the pleasure and well-being of others expressing itself in fitting word and deed. Out of the heart issues that courtesy which marks the gentle-man, the gentle-woman.

The Master applies this principle in searching fashion to the sin of malice. It was said by them of old time and it is said by all the ordinances of God and man today, "Thou shalt not kill." And a cast of this moral injunction is so far taken as a matter of course as scarcely to secure a "rise" from the

ordinary conscience. It is the rarest thing for these words to fall upon the ear of any one who has a thought of murder.

There is however not only the murder of the hand but also the murder of the heart. The man with no blood on his hand may have red malice in his heart. The ill will which would destroy the peace of another life or strike down its dearly cherished hopes is a violation of the command. The killing of another life is not solely a question of spilling blood. The wounding of another's honor in malice, the destruction of his good name, the dashing of the cup of joy out of his hands, the thwarting of his plan for life and usefulness become nothing less than murderous. They take life.

The Revised Version removes the softening qualification "without cause," which some moral sluggard intent upon easier terms had wrongly interpolated—"Every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." The ill will and malice which make against the peace and well-being of other lives even though they never become actually red-handed by murderous acts here stand condemned.

The heart of ill will, according to the teaching of Jesus, cannot offer acceptable worship. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there remember that thy brother has aught against thee"—even though his grudge be not well founded, there must be an effort to remove it—"leave there thy gift before the altar; first be reconciled to thy brother, then come and offer thy gift." The horizontal relationships of life must be made right so much as lieth in us, if we would have the perpendicular relation fruitful when we offer worship. If we would "ascend into the hill of the Lord" or "stand in a holy place" we must come with "clean hands"—no blood on them—and with "pure hearts," devoid of malice.

The Master makes the same searching application of the law of purity. The command regarding adultery is violated by

the overt act. It is also violated "in the heart" where "the greedy gaze of lust intended to keep warm the unlawful desire" is allowed. He puts his law in the heart where it belongs and insists upon truth in the inward parts.

The evil act is a symptom indicative of wrong conditions underlying it. The wise physician studies symptoms, for they enter into all competent diagnosis, but he treats conditions and causes. If a woman has a headache a little antipyrin or phenacetin or some other wretched coal tar preparation, which many thoughtless people are taking in these days to their hurt, will stop it. But the wise physician ascertains the cause of the headache and treats that. He goes to the root of the matter. He seeks to remove the cause that there may not be a fresh supply of headache to be drugged into insensibility next week. This course of action differentiates the physician from the quack. It lifts his treatment above the use of some cheap concoction advertised in the newspapers and sold to the unthinking.

The Great Physician who came not to the "whole" but to the "sick," not to call the righteous but sinners, pursues the same wise course. The outward deeds may under compulsion be brought into conformity to certain rules leaving the springs of action all unrenewed. In that event the symptoms are altered without correcting the underlying trouble. The legalism of the Pharisee is produced in place of the character of a son of the Most High. "The law of the Lord is perfect," facing us upon a set of ideals which are right. The grace of the Lord is mighty, renewing the springs of action.

The office of the old dispensation which produced the best to be found among the Scribes and Pharisees was that of the law-giver. The office of the new dispensation which is designed to produce all the fine fruits of the Spirit growing steadily and organically out of a renewed heart, is the office of a

life-giver. It was said by one of old time, "Now these are the commandments, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God commandeth to teach you that ye might do them." The Master said, "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

The replacing of the formal law of righteousness by the more exacting liberty of the spirit does not mean any lessening of the emphasis upon the necessity for right living. There can be no substitute for righteousness. The striking summary made by Matthew Arnold voices a great truth. "The message of the Old Testament is, 'Salvation by righteousness.' The message of the New Testament is, 'Righteousness through Jesus Christ.' " In either case the supreme demand is a rightened life which is our holy, acceptable and reasonable service. The insistence upon inwardness contained in this message is the demand that the righteousness shall be vital.

The immediate necessity of making the attitude of heart right within was here urged. "Agree with thine adversary *quickly.*" Do it now. He may die tonight and you would always reproach yourself if you allowed him to carry into the unseen world the burden of your ill will. He may live and he needs the added help of your fraternal regard even as you need it for your own peace and growth. Agree with thine adversary quickly.

"Slow to anger, plenteous in mercy." Put the speed limit on your condemnations. Lay in a full supply of kindliness to keep your hearth and your heart warm the long winter through. To be reconciled to our fellows becomes a mighty aid in effecting reconciliation to God.

When the honest merchant is patient and merciful with some dishonest clerk, shielding him from exposure and allowing him time and chance to make restitution; when the man of truth is patient with some liar that he may win him to a life worthy of

confidence; when a pure wife forgives and bears with the misdeeds of a husband who has done wrong; when parents having given their substance for the good of their children only to have that affectionate interest wasted in conscienceless living persist in unselfish devotion; and when the Infinite forgives those who have insulted his merciful patience—in every such case the one who extends forgiveness in his effort to effect a reconciliation goes outside the city walls to a place called Calvary. He there suffers for the wrongdoing of others. And in every such case we find a form of righteousness which exceeds the righteousness which is by rule—we find a form of righteousness destined to become morally efficacious in taking away the sin of the world.

XVIII

THE VALUE OF TRUE AND KINDLY SPEECH

Matt. 5: 33-37

The liar counterfeits the circulating medium of society. Social intercourse with any measure of value is only possible on a basis of confidence and the man who lies would break down popular confidence in the coin of that realm. The lack of veracity is therefore more than a personal fault, or the deception of an individual—it is an act of violence against the social order.

If my watch lies to me, I may miss a train or an important engagement. If a man lies to me, I am similarly misled. If lying becomes common then the prevailing uncertainty as to where reliance can be placed and where it must be withheld is such as to defeat the very ends of social contact.

The cowardice of the lie stamps it with an added meanness. In the long run we must live on a basis of fact and brave men ask nothing better—they will tolerate nothing less. The coward and the sneak who lie seek to introduce some soft fabric of falsehood on which they may enjoy a brief season of comfort. The man of courage tells the truth even when it hurts.

The habit of insincerity eats out the moral fiber. The man who lives by misrepresentation comes speedily to be lath and plaster where he should be solid oak. The amenities tinged with unreality fail of efficiency. Social insincerity becomes a bar to good fellowship. The fulsome praise in funeral addresses has done much to rob that service of the intended comfort. The prevalence of extravagant statement and wilful misrepresentation in advertising has weakened the appeal of

"paid matter." The false statement in business transactions occasions shame and grief to men of commercial integrity and honor as bringing reproach upon their order. The careless inaccuracy in letters of recommendation has discounted the face value of all such missives.

The taint of unveracity has invaded the holiest domains. The sectarian zeal which overstates the worth of particular values in our total Christianity lowers the church in the eyes of men; the extravagant claim made for the Bible that "it is the infallible word of God from lid to lid" smacks of the promoter conscious that he is over-praising his wares and expectant of a scaling down of his claims by discriminating listeners, has brought discredit upon the cause it would serve; the exaggerated efforts of partisans who "point with pride" and "view with alarm" far beyond anything justified by the facts cloud the issue and hinder statesmanship; the habit of special pleading becomes a foe to serious argument and to the advance of knowledge by honest conference; the lack of accuracy and balance in the fervent appeal of the reformer cause his attempts to seem unreal and hinder the cause he would advance.

The word of the Lord is blunt—"Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." This terse verdict rendered by a higher court upon all manner of insincerity is affirmed here below in the attitude held by all serious men who rejoice in a close fit between the words used and the facts in the case. The maintenance of public and private speech in such measure of confidence as will make of it a reliable medium for the transaction of all kinds of business is a weighty obligation.

"Let your yea be yea," and not some clever approximation to it. The notion that some advantageous plea of "not guilty" may be entered later because of the fluid character of the utterance is scandalous. "Let your nay be nay," with no

swerving to the right hand or to the left. Whatsoever is not this cometh of evil.

So vital was this matter of veracity deemed by James, the apostle of common sense, that he bestows this high praise upon accurate and honest speech: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." The control of the tongue is made a kind of test case. If the man's moral nature rings true at this point the apostle stands ready to give him a clean bill of health. The habit of wise and kind speech with never a break from the law of fact or the law of love indicates a moral soundness worthy of all confidence.

The tremendous significance of the tongue is here declared in strong terms. "We put bits in the horses' mouths that they may obey us," and even though the bit is small, it controls the situation. "The ships though they be so great and are driven by fierce winds are turned about with a very small helm. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasteth great things"—it holds the key to the situation.

On the day of Pentecost the men who were to turn the world upside down saw "tongues like as of fire." Presently they began to speak "with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." The organ of instruction, of persuasion, of moral appeal was thus exalted and its mighty potency for good indicated in these mysterious terms.

And the converse of this proposition stands equally plain. "How great a matter a little fire kindleth." The overturning of a lamp at milking time by Mrs. O'Leary's cow lays the great city by the Lake in ashes. The careless flinging away of a lighted cigar sets ablaze the whole forest in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho. The forest fire rages until many lives and an untold amount of property pay the forfeit. Even so the tongue may by untrue or unkind speech start a conflagration of evil which the efforts of years will not quench.

The steady control of speech by the spirit of veracity and of fraternity demands some superhuman aid. "Every kind of beast and of bird, of serpent and of things in the sea hath been tamed but the tongue can no man tame." The lion tamer whose intrepid eye and steadfast soul cause the king of beasts to cower at his feet finds himself helpless here. Our only hope lies in the enthronement of God's grace in the heart setting the lips to speak his truth and the mouth to shew forth his praise.

The twofold capacity of this particular faculty for good and for ill seems amazing. The same fountain cannot send forth "sweet water and bitter." The fig tree does not bear both figs and olive berries. But "out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing." And, alas! the differing streams alternate in the same life. The lips which reverently voice the prayer of aspiration or the song of gratitude are sometimes found giving shape to careless, cruel gossip or to inaccurate and uncharitable speech working ill to one's neighbor. When the apostle says, "These things ought not so to be," the response of human society comes in a loud Amen.

There are professing Christians who dig deep the graves of all their prospects for spiritual usefulness not with spades but with their soft, red tongues. They bury beyond the hope of a resurrection the chance they had for moral efficacy in the service of the Master.

And the possibilities of exalted usefulness by the right use of speech are no less great. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." The reactions secured by kindly speech even in situations unpromising fill the heart with hope. How differently the same sentiment may be uttered. "Keep off the grass," is short, sharp and peremptory—and it almost provokes by its very tone an open disregard of the injunction. "Why not use the walk?" conveys the same intent, and much more win-

somely! The same tongue may voice the same sentiment in a way to elicit "blessing" or "cursing."

"Words fitly spoken are like apples of gold in pitchers of silver." It is a gracious picture of accurate, temperate, well-reasoned and kindly speech. And it lies within the power of every possessor of a tongue to mint such evidences of value and put them in circulation.

The three monkeys ingeniously carved on the frieze of the temple enclosure at Nikko, Japan, show one of the group carefully covering his eyes with his hands and another similarly covering his ears and a third screening his mouth. They are resolved to "See no evil," "Hear no evil" and "Speak no evil." The reproductions of that group have circulated far and wide. It would be well if they could carry from the tombs of Iyeyasu and Iyemitsu to the ends of the earth the lesson of a more charitable outlook and intake, coupled with a kindlier mode of speech.

The Master also puts himself on record as opposed to the habit of uttering oaths. He would not detract from the sanctity of carefully ordered speech in courts of law where the invocation of the divine Presence as a Witness to the truthfulness of the statements made is supposed to add to the validity of the testimony. He would undertake to lift our common speech to that high level of veracity where it would need no such attestation. "Swear not at all, but let your yea be yea and your nay be nay."

It is by no means clear that he would forbid the use of solemn oaths taken reverently in courts of law to enhance the sense of veracity in those who perchance may be morally immature. But he would hold before us as an ideal the simplicity and accuracy of utterance which would make all attestations superfluous. Putting one's self in the presence of God upon

occasion by the employment of an oath may mean the allowance of a measure of license on other occasions.

The heaven is God's throne and the earth is his footstool and Jerusalem, the place of first rank in the minds of those Jesus addressed, is his city. The use of any name in careless oath thus becomes irreverent and profane. Let common speech be so straightforward as to need no sort of added affirmation to cause its acceptance at full face value.

The eschewing of all oaths, of all titles and of all showy forms in social intercourse or in religious worship by a certain branch of the Christian Church has given to that group of people, not numerous but widely and deeply influential, a simplicity, a directness and a sweetness of spirit upon which the busy world sets high value.

XIX

HYPOCRISY AND SINCERITY

Matt. 6: 1-18

There is a delicate irony running through this passage. The Master of utterance, voicing his message as none other ever has, used all the stops in the organ of human speech. His picture of the ostentatious almsgiver blowing his own horn, "sounding a trumpet before him in the streets" as he made his pompous way on some errand of mercy; the showy devotee praying at the street corner to be seen of men and slyly peeping through half-closed eyelids to be sure that his effort was receiving proper recognition; the long-winded petitioner lavish in his use of language with "vain repetitions" hoping to be "heard for his much speaking" after the manner of uninstructed heathen; the man who fasted proclaiming his self-denial by disfiguring his face with an expression preternaturally sad that he might "be seen of men to fast"—all these neat cartoons of showy insincerity reveal a vein of humor.

The swollen windbag of pretense can sometimes be better punctured by the keen thrust of laughter than by the heavier blow of serious argument. The "taking off" of some conspicuous piece of religious unreality with a few sharp strokes may have more value than many serious words either of denunciation or of entreaty. "The merry heart doeth good like medicine" in more ways than were contemplated perhaps by the author of that Scripture—the very sight of hearts made merry by some witty rebuke directed against religious insincerity may produce deep and lasting good.

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen

of them." The appreciation of our fellows is not to be scorned. All men enjoy the esteem of their associates and they ought to enjoy it. The young fellow cut on the bias always flinging out sneers against "popularity" and insisting that "he does not care a straw what people think about him," probably cares more than any of us. He has an idea that his distorted attitude will cause him to be talked about more because of his oddity than would a more rational course. The appreciation which comes naturally by right living is to be prized.

But the men Christ had in mind were making that form of reward a supreme object of desire. The doing of religious acts from an irreligious motive corrupts the whole inner life. The lack of consistency in such case destroys the fine fibre of the soul. The men he described were arraying themselves in showy garments of almsgiving, of devotion and of self-denial, clearly and solely to be admired. And that the measure of admiration elicited might be generous they did it elaborately and stood ever "in the public eye."

The desire for esteem is a disappointing source of motive. The boy who cannot do his duty unless he is being petted and praised for it is a sorry specimen—he is in line to become a self-conscious, conceited little prig. The man who cannot perform unless he is in the limelight is a broken reed on which in some crisis the applauding multitude may lean to its own hurt. The man intent upon doing square work and square work only, regardless of the presence or the absence of popular acclaim, will indeed win the appreciation of his fellows, he scarcely knows how. The law of indirection applies here, for the man who aims at popularity loses it, while the man who loses all thought of it in the devoted investment of his life finds it.

The Master made his appeal for simplicity and genuineness in the accustomed paradoxes of the East. It would be impos-

sible for the right hand and the left hand of a common consciousness to be literally unaware of their respective movements. The straining after secrecy becomes itself a bit of folly. There are men who show an unnatural eagerness not to have the left hand know what the right hand is doing, especially if the right hand is not doing very much. The Master's word does not have in view such an entirely anonymous method of doing good as never to connect the gift and the giver. This would be impracticable and in many situations "the gift without the giver is bare."

But Jesus would anticipate the word of Paul—"He that giveth let him do it with simplicity." "It is more blessed to give than to receive"—a great deal more blessed. It hurts the independent, self-respecting life to "receive" alms at all. The Christian donor therefore, for his own sake and still more for the sake of those whose need he would relieve, avoids "the sound of the trumpet" which might fix the attention of others upon his bounty or upon the sad necessities of a fellow-being.

Jesus warned his disciples against the habit of praying on the street corners to be seen of men. "Verily I say unto you they have their reward." They prayed to be seen of men and they were seen of men—they got what they prayed for. "They had their reward"—the account was settled in full and there was nothing further coming to them from that sort of devotion.

"Enter into thy closet and shut the door and pray to thy Father in secret." Jesus is not here defining a physical act. He is insisting that every prayer shall be a direct, genuine and thoughtful transaction between the soul of the man who prays and God. The minister standing in the presence of a great congregation may none the less enter his closet and shut the door if his prayer is offered to God alone. The Pharisee who went up into the Temple to pray would, unless he had changed his mood, be found still praying unworthily though he was

located Crusoe-like on a lonely island. It is not a question of physical location but of the mood and intent of the heart.

The enterprising reporter, sharing fully in that oft-remarked local pride, who referred to the somewhat extended invocation at a religious convention as "one of the most eloquent prayers ever offered to a Boston audience," may have builded more wisely than he knew. There are many audiences who have eloquent prayers offered to them in such fashion as to quite banish the spirit of devotion from the hearts of all who hear. Any such deliverance even though it may be made in proper posture is justly characterized as a "grandstand-pray."

The Master's prophetic eye seemed to run ahead and to note the futility of certain prayers where the length and breadth and height of the devotional effort were not equal. If the man who offers a public prayer has a good flow of language it is possible for him to continue for twenty or twenty-five minutes. If he has a reasonable familiarity with contemporary history he may readily find openings where divine blessings might suitably be implored in such volume as to make the breadth of his prayerful interest stretch as far as the east is from the west. And it is possible for people, some people, to keep their heads down and their eyes closed during the whole of this far-flung, widely ranging and long drawn out utterance. But it might be painful to inquire too closely into their thoughts during all that time or into the ability of the man himself to maintain unbrokenly the mood of devotion and the sense of direct appeal to God. The real "height" of the prayer might bring what is often felt by the patient people to be "a disappointing sense of flatness."

"Use not vain repetitions." The heathen do—"they think they will be heard for their much speaking." We should have outgrown this folly of the spiritually immature. It were better to speak five words with a clear understanding of what we

are about and with an unwavering sense of the august nature of devotion than ten thousand words of pious sound flowing from the lips with no more spiritual vitality in them than might be detected in the efforts of a good talking machine.

"When ye fast be not of a sad countenance that ye may appear unto men to fast." You are not doing it for their sake. The beauty and value of such acts of self-denial are to be found in the fact that they are personal acts, the inner life striving for more perfect harmony with the Infinite life of the Father. The outward acts of devotion are like the distinctive garb appropriate to certain moods of life or forms of service. It was Phillips Brooks who said: "The nun's quietude, the priest's purity, the mourner's sorrow, the bride's joy, the soldier's glory—all are first uttered and then deepened by the garments in which they are severally clothed. First you give the emotion its true symbol and then the symbol in its turn gives new strength back to the emotion."

"Anoint thy head and wash thy face, when thou fasteth." He would not have us proclaim our acts of devotion by conspicuous departures from the ordinary custom of our lives. "The Lord looketh not on the outward appearance but on the heart." The disfigured countenance, pulled awry it may be with a sad look which exaggerates the real spirit of self-denial within, does not impose on him. In the long run it fails utterly in the eyes of men, for with genuine discernment they speedily sort out the sham from the real thing—they too look not for any length of time on the outward appearance but on the heart.

The principles here indicated are susceptible of wide application. The professional smile which shows more teeth than soul is sometimes worn to be seen of men and is taken off at night with the frock coat. It is a wretched bit of sham militating against the cherishing of that honest sympathy which every true man feels for all his fellows. The company man-

ners which are worn that their possessor may have glory of men enter speedily into their reward. They become as thorns which choke the spirit of genuine courtesy and make it unfruitful.

The whole effort to keep up a vigorous and handsome body of good habits, almsgiving, prayer, fasting and the like, without an indwelling soul to give them meaning and worth, stands here condemned. "After this manner, therefore"—not always in these words but after this style and in this high mood—pray and live: "Our Father who art in heaven, may thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

XX

THE USE OF THE SABBATH

Mark 2: 23—3: 6

"The seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord thy God—in it thou shalt not do any work." Here is the letter of the law! No provision is made for the exceptions commonly named touching works of "charity" or of "necessity." "Thou shalt not do any work"—a strict enforcement would utterly preclude the strenuous labors of preachers and teachers who on the Sabbath pour the utmost of vitality into their appointed work. The letter would kill—it is to the spirit and intent of the command that we must look if we would have life.

"The seventh day"—we have also broken away from the particular day named in the old command. The seventh day is now the busiest and most laborious day in the week for merchants and housekeepers. We have transferred the observance to the first day of the week, making it a standing commemoration of the fact that our Lord rose from the dead "on the first day of the week." The day has been changed and the spirit of its observance altered by the coming of Christ.

The petty, inflexible rules of legalist or Pharisee have little worth, but these four great principles suggested in the lesson invest the day with an inalienable dignity and worth.

In the first place *human need takes precedence over ritual requirement.* In an emergency the hungry disciples were right in rubbing out the heads of wheat according to a custom prevailing in the country districts of Palestine, to satisfy their need. In an emergency the action of David and his men in eating the shew bread ordinarily reserved for the priests was

approved. In an emergency the need of the brute takes precedence over ritual regulation, for Jesus said that men were warranted at whatever cost of labor in rescuing an unfortunate animal from the pit where it had fallen.

The Master would not counsel men to spend their Sabbaths habitually in plucking heads of wheat or in working with livestock. He did not counsel the use of the shew bread as a regular ration for hungry soldiers. But he indicated that each situation must be judged on its merits and that the line of action must be determined by the humane considerations involved rather than by blind obedience to ritual requirement.

In the second place the *true observance of the Sabbath is not negative but positive.* "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day"—it is unlawful to refuse help when the opportunity for service offers.

Here in the synagogue was a man with a withered hand. In Luke's Gospel the physician's eye and the humanitarian instinct note the fact that it was "his right hand." The organ of expert and useful action was crippled, greatly reducing his earning power. The Pharisees narrowly watched him to see what course Jesus would take. They asked questions if perchance they might find occasion to accuse and discredit him.

Jesus accepted their challenge. "Rise up and stand forth in the midst," he said to the cripple. Then he asked his critics: "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm? To save life or to destroy it?" The manifest justice and reasonableness of his position caused them to "hold their peace." To leave a withered hand unhealed would be to do harm through neglect. Jesus therefore said boldly, "Stretch forth thy hand." And the man's own active faith and obedience combined with the redemptive power of the Master made him every whit whole on the Sabbath day.

There are people who think they are keeping the Sabbath

because they refrain from working or picnicking, from fishing or going to the baseball game on that day. But what are they doing? Every man is a Sabbath breaker who fails to utilize the special opportunities the day brings for the advancement of the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy. To spend the day in reading trash or in gossip, in immoderate eating and intemperate drinking, in the mood of ill will or sullen indifference, is to break the Sabbath.

To do good on the Sabbath is lawful; to do evil by doing nothing is unlawful. To save life, the finer, higher life of reverence, trust and obedience on the Sabbath is lawful; to destroy or to endanger that life by careless neglect and profane habits unfavorable to its culture is unlawful. The whole attitude must be positive. We keep the Sabbath by what we do rather than by what we avoid. And the responsibility of meeting the demands of a positive and useful Sabbath observance is the best safeguard against the dissipation which would mar the day.

A third principle is to be found in the fact that the *Sabbath is to be viewed as an opportunity and not as a burden.* "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." It was made for man as food and water, as air and light were made for him—it answers to fundamental need.

The French in a wild burst of insurgency abolished the Christian Sabbath, substituting for it a secular rest day in every ten according to the decimal system now prevalent among them in weights, measures and coinage. But they found that it would not work. They had overlooked the fact that the Sabbath was made for man. They were compelled to go back and humbly pick it out of the scrap heap where they had flung it. They had to re-establish it because of its beneficent ministry to human need.

The Sabbath was made for the physical man, for the toilers

who rise early on other days, for the salesmen who work late in retail stores on Saturday night, for the operatives who are shut up in factories during all the week, for all the weary and heavy laden. They all look forward to the Sabbath for the enjoyment of prolonged sleep, for the chance to breathe the outdoor air, for the healing rest which comes by divine appointment.

The Sabbath was made for the domestic man, for the toiling father whose long hours prevent him from seeing his children during the week except by gaslight, for the hurried business man who on Sunday deepens his own acquaintance with the loved ones in whose interest mainly the business itself is conducted.

The Sabbath was made for the mind of man—the quiet hours with good books, the sense of bathing the mind clean in real literature instead of soaking it in the muddier waters of hastily written dailies, the chance for reflection and meditation on the higher, holier phases of human experience all come naturally into wholesome Sabbath observance.

The Sabbath was made for the spiritual man—the chance to worship under inspiring leadership and in goodly fellowship, the chance to pray and to serve in a fullness of privilege impossible on other days, the leisure for rendering more of "the little unremembered acts of kindness and of love" all come as a priceless boon to the man whose spiritual nature under the pressure of the work-a-day world would otherwise fail of its full opportunity.

The Sabbath was made for every such man, and without it under conditions at present inevitable, whole areas of human nature would suffer an unspeakable neglect. We need not split hairs or match pennies with those who ignore Christian principle in lowering the standard of Sabbath observance. We can meet them with the claim of Christ that the day stands

for certain opportunities which cannot be ignored by those who would possess the more abundant life. The day is not imposed by arbitrary authority as a burdensome bit of ritual —it is graciously offered as an opportunity to those who seek the highest self-realization.

And finally, the demands of a perfected humanity furnish *the determining principle touching the use of the day.* "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." The life intent solely on physical gratification or social pleasure will never know how to use the day aright. The day can only be interpreted by that spirit which holds in view the ideal manhood manifested in him who is "Lord of the Sabbath."

This principle lifts the whole question out of narrow bondage to the letter into the high and exacting liberty of the spirit. We are summoned by each recurring Sabbath to do and to leave undone, to practice and to avoid, to include and to exclude, with constant reference to the bearing of our decisions upon the attainment of that ideal manhood for ourselves and for our fellows.

"By their fruits ye shall know!" What type of man is turned out by Sunday card playing and careless lounging, by Sunday golf playing and endless automobiling, by the habit of giving up Sunday to social entertainment, to the exclusion of worship and spiritual service? Does that mode of life produce the public-spirited citizen, the philanthropic woman, the devoted worker in the charities of the city, the unselfish, spiritually-minded Christian? The candid man admits instantly that careless, easy-going Sabbath usage does not promise any steady or considerable supply of that ideal manhood or womanhood which is lord of the Sabbath.

A missionary to the Indians once told them that if they planted their corn on Sunday it would not grow. In that perversity of spirit which we all understand, they immediately

proceeded to test his claim. They planted one acre of corn on Sunday; they hoed it on Sunday and "worked it" on no other day but Sunday throughout the season. And because they took such pains with it, it yielded more corn than any other acre on the reservation. Then the Indians laughed at the missionary and would not attend church.

There is a penalty however for hoeing corn on Sunday. It reveals itself not in a diminished yield of corn but in the stunted growth of "the man with the hoe." The corn may grow to its full size, but the man will not grow to his full size nor yield those fine fruits of the Spirit which belong to human life at its best. There is that in every man which will not grow at all unless it be given the advantages for which the Sabbath stands.

The day awaits us as a lovely green spot of leisure and repair, of higher aspiration and spiritual opportunity. It welcomes all those who plod wearily across the monotonous stretches of dusty labor. May men thank God for it and use it in gaining that finer manhood which stands as its ultimate lord.

XXI

MALIGNANT UNBELIEF

Mark 3: 20-35

The reactions which the work of Christ produced in certain quarters testify to the deep-rooted evil he came to remove. It was "a strong man's house" which he entered and spiritual vigor of the first order was demanded for the binding of that strong man. Here in this passage the evil purpose which spurned his ministry and finally nailed him to the cross began to show its hand.

"He came unto his own"—his own kinsmen—"and his own received him not." They said, "He is beside himself"—he is crazy. "He came unto his own"—his own nation—"and the scribes which came down from Jerusalem" (for Judea was already arraying itself against the judgment of Galilee upon his Messianic claims) "said, He hath Beelzebub." They insisted that he himself was possessed of the devil. What meaner charge could blind, unreasoning malice make!

"He is beside himself"—judged by the current standards the charge was true! He was what the machinist calls "an eccentric." The eccentric in mechanics is a wheel which does not turn on the usual circle—it follows its own method in the curve it describes. When a Russian nobleman of our day undertook a literal and painstaking obedience to the words of Christ as he understood them, men said, "He is crazy."

The method of the Master indicated that he had regard to another center than that found in the current practice. The popular answer to the famous question propounded by the Westminster divines would have read in that day, "The chief

end of man is to advance himself and to enjoy his personal success forever." The self-centered life would not have seemed to the contemporaries of Jesus "eccentric"—they never would have said of such an one, "He is beside himself." The pursuit of self-interest would have seemed to them entirely rational.

But another mind was in Christ. He did nothing through strife or vainglory. He looked not on his own things but upon the things of others. He thought it no prize to be grasped to be equal with God, but he made himself of no reputation. He took upon himself the form, the spirit and the task of the servant and being found in fashion as a man he went about doing good. He humbled himself and became obedient even unto the death of the cross. He was "eccentric" in that his life was not centered after the manner prevalent in his time.

He turned many things end for end and upside down. He bade men love their enemies and not their friends only. He insisted that they should do good and not harm to those who despitefully used them. He said "the poor in spirit" were the fortunate and blessed of earth, and that ultimately the gentle, not the grasping, would inherit all there is. He said that if a man saved his life he would lose it; that security could be gained only by losing, that is to say, investing, the life in devotion and service. In these strange paradoxes he indicated his philosophy. It was a complete reversal of many of the current judgments. We are not surprised that his own kinsmen deemed him mad.

But when the prevailing practice is wrong side up it must be "turned upside down" to make it right. When moral judgments are awry they must be reversed if we are to reach the truth. When the boldness of some claim startles us out of our accustomed ruts of thinking, it is wise to ask, "Is the author of that word mad or are we?" It may be that an equally

radical reversal of judgment may be demanded from us.

The stupid bystanders on the day of Pentecost witnessing the glories of spiritual victory could find no better interpretation than this—"These men are full of new wine." The servant was not above his Lord—they called the Master "crazy" and his disciples "drunken."

But the Scribes added a dash of malice and temper to their moral stupidity. "He hath Beelzebub and by the prince of the devils he casteth out devils." This Beelzebub was a heathen deity, the god of the flies, and the charge therefore contained a peculiarly offensive sneer at the beneficent work accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth. The evil forces were manifestly subject to him, and his enemies therefore insisted that he must be in collusion with Satan, the head of the kingdom of evil.

In a few swift strokes Jesus showed the absurdity of such a claim. "How can Satan cast out Satan?" Will a house stand when it is divided against itself? They might feel sure that the devil was not committing suicide. The kingdom divided against itself cannot withstand its own speedy dissolution.

The fact that the evil forces in many lives there in Galilee were being held in leash and were being cast out testified to the fact that a stronger man had entered Satan's house and having bound him was now defeating his purposes. The Master here indicates the source of his power to bless—it lay in his own personal righteousness. In him the forces of evil were naught and over him Satan had no power.

Jesus was grieved by the turpitude of those who made an open revolt against good by attributing his beneficent work to the prince of devils. "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." The wicked reversal of all sound judgment attributing good deeds to an evil source issued in a moral condition which Jesus called "an

eternal sin." It produced a moral callousness which finds no forgiveness either in this world or in the world to come because it neither seeks nor desires forgiveness.

The unpardonable sin here suggested is not the utterance of any technical word of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit; it is not the commission of some particularly heinous act of disobedience to God's law; it is rather the gradual fixing of the moral life in a false attitude by that type of perversity which Jesus found in those Pharisees who would refer his good deeds to Beelzebub. At last there is no capacity left for moral response. The man who is anxious and troubled lest he may have committed the unpardonable sin may rest assured that he has not committed it—his very unrest and moral sensitiveness proclaim the fact of life within. No penitent soul is ever guilty of that sin.

The very essence of Christ's own righteousness and spiritual efficiency lay in the enduement of the Holy Spirit. He was "filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb." "The Spirit descended on him as a dove," at his baptism in Jordan. He "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee," binding up the broken-hearted and accomplishing deliverance for them that were bruised. To attribute the efficiency of his efforts to the prince of devils was indeed to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and to be in danger of an eternal condemnation.

The peril of attributing that which is good to an evil source is as modern as the morning paper. It is the belief of many wise and good men that the social unrest of our day is due to the functioning of the divine spirit in human society. The discontent is divinely ordered because we are in "a far country" wasting human values innumerable by our unworthy mode of life. Men and women are "in want" of a more equitable share of the good things they have helped to create—and God would have them feel and cherish that want. There

is a widespread insistence upon a more democratic spirit in the control of industry—and this of itself is an assertion of the worth and dignity of human nature in whatever walk of life it may be found.

It were easy to brand all this unrest as blind and ungrateful; to denounce these resolute demands as selfish and insolent; to offer an affront to this rising tide of democracy by terming it "the voice of the mob" attacking the forces of peace and order. And this characterization comes perilously near to being akin to the sin of the Scribes of old when they attributed that which was good to the action of the spirit of evil. A more careful analysis and a more complete synthesis of the social aspirations now becoming vocal in all lands would indicate that a strong man has entered the house and that he is destined to bind the forces of evil which have been working injury to the weak. He is insisting upon the rule of those principles which are at once humane and divine.

Sore punishment is decreed for those "who have trodden under foot the Son of God and have counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and have done despite unto the spirit of grace." Sore punishment awaits those who ruthlessly trample upon the moral stirrings which would lift the unprivileged section of the race into a sense of its real kinship with God. The same rebuke will be given to those who speak contemptuously of that spirit of sacrificial devotion which is the blood of a new covenant, or who do despite to that spirit of grace which is causing many who have been sitting in darkness to see a great light and to walk in the strength of a brave hope.

It was announced to Jesus in the midst of his searching rebuke to his perverted detractors that his mother and his brethren were seeking him. He had no word of disparagement for the value of those relationships which are after the flesh.

Almost his last word from the cross was one of thoughtful provision for Mary, his mother. But he recognized the fact that moral relationships transcend family ties, even as they underlie our physical kinship, giving it worth and stability. "Who is my mother or my brethren?" He swept his hand across the face of the company which had come to believe on him, and added: "Behold my mother and my brethren. Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother."

The sense of spiritual kinship is deeper and more lasting. It takes precedence over the accidents of birth. It rises superior to the considerations of age and sex. When we live the filial life, doing the will of God, we enter into the family of the Father in heaven and into the enjoyment of those higher kinships from which we shall go no more out.

XXII

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN MEATS

Mark 7: 1-23

"Then came the Pharisees and certain of the Scribes and when they saw his disciples eat bread with unwashen hands, they found fault." The blue-blooded ecclesiastics, more careful of their traditions than of moral values, more intent upon religious technique than upon the weightier matters of justice and mercy, were on hand to make trouble. They were powerless to heal the sick or to restore the sinful, but they could "find fault." Their noses were long and sharp in scenting the least departure from their burdensome traditions.

Their objection to the unwashed hands of the disciples was not hygienic or sanitary—it was based altogether on ceremonial grounds. When a high and dry Pharisee came in from the street or from any manner of contact with his fellows he scrupulously washed off the ceremonial defilement which might possibly have fastened upon him. Some uncircumcised Gentile might have touched elbows with him in the crowd or allowed the wanton air to blow directly from his objectionable person to the sacred form of the Pharisee. The purpose of this fastidious care was not physical cleanliness, which is altogether desirable, but a ceremonial purity.

They had made religion an affair of washing cups and pots, of ceremonial cleansing of vessels and of tables. The great vital things in religious faith and observance were overlaid with an elaborate *régime* having to do with artificial distinctions between clean and unclean meats, between ceremonial sanctity and ceremonial defilement. The Pharisees had exalted

ecclesiastical etiquette far above righteousness of heart. And generations of this ill-directed emphasis had produced a race of men of whom Christ said with telling accuracy, "This people honoreth me with their *lips,* but their *heart* is far from me."

The system as a system stands in the same category with the highly developed scheme of taboo found in the Islands of Polynesia. In Hawaii it could only be imposed by the priests and was intimately associated with religious faith. But elsewhere in Polynesia the kings and chiefs exercised the power of taboo and used it oftentimes to serve the ends of ambition and avarice. The selfish appetites of men led to the making of the flesh of pigs, fowls, turtle and several kinds of fish taboo to women—these dainties were reserved entirely for gods and men. Mothers after childbirth were taboo and so were their newborn children. One of the strictest taboos was incurred by those who handled the body of a dead person or assisted at the funeral. It was a system which readily lent itself to the selfish designs of kings and priests.

In its inception the Hebrew system of purifications on religious grounds may have had some value in educating an undeveloped people. The utilization of these various observances as symbols may have aided in inculcating in their minds a clearer conception of holiness at a period when abstract ethical conceptions would have made no effective appeal. But with the writings of the great prophets before them that educative value belonging more properly to the kindergarten stage of a nation's development, had passed and the painstaking insistence upon the fully developed system of minute observance had become altogether trivial.

The Master allowed and encouraged his disciples to disregard those empty restrictions. To the high church party of that day this seemed the most violent heresy subversive of the entire method by which their conceit and their purses had

alike profited. With a show of moral indignation and of outraged sanctity worthy of a better cause, they called the attention of Jesus to the delinquencies of his associates—"Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders —they eat bread with unwashen hands!" The undiscerning ecclesiastics had learned to look on the outward appearance but not on the heart; they could see the hands of these disciples; they could not see the new peace and joy attained by an experience of the more vital truths of religious faith.

We feel here the first drops in that coming shower which developed into a storm of opposition when Paul the apostle of spiritual liberty found it necessary to withstand the reactionary Peter to the face because he had shown a vacillating attitude regarding this very matter. "For before certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles, but when they were come he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision." O foolish Peter and foolish adherents of ceremonial detail in every land and time, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth! Received ye the Spirit by attention to ceremony or by the hearing of faith?

It required a vision and a voice from heaven to persuade Peter that he was not to call "common or unclean" what "God had cleansed" in his own beneficent purpose. He must see a great sheet let down from heaven containing all manner of beasts and birds and creeping things and hear the injunction, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat" before he would find himself in a mood to welcome and to serve "one of another nation." He had to be providentially prepared for the appeal of Cornelius else he would not have said, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him."

"Meat commendeth us not to God. Neither if we eat are we the better nor if we eat not are we the worse," where the

distinction in meats is based on ceremonial grounds. It is not that which entereth into a man which defileth him, but that which having found place in his heart proceedeth out of him in speech and action. From out the hearts of men "proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness—all these evil things come from within and defile the man."

The Master stood plainly and strongly for the quality of inwardness which came to be the cardinal principle in the Gospel proclaimed by his leading apostle. He knew that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink" taken in strict accordance with a carefully prescribed ritual "but righteousness and peace and joy in the divine spirit." And when Paul entered into the method of Jesus, as he did more fully than any of the original Twelve, he who had been a Pharisee of the Pharisees, observing "the traditions of the elders" after the strictest fashion, cried out in his joyous sense of spiritual liberty, "The spirit of life hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

The Master knew what relentless opposition his course would provoke. But having counted the cost he set himself like a flint against the whole method of "turning religion," as Dr. Nehemiah Boynton puts it, "into an affair of dish washing." He would make his followers free, untrammeled moral agents loyal to that law of God which is within. He would write his precepts upon their hearts and reproduce the spirit of his own matchless life in their inward parts. He would lift them out of that bondage to the letter which is fatal to peace and joy into the high and exacting liberty of the Spirit wherewith he makes men free.

When the Pharisees found fault with his disciples because

of their inattention to minor requirements in the tradition of the elders, the Master turned the tables upon his critics by showing that they were unfaithful to the real implications of that system to which they professed such devoted loyalty.

These sticklers for religious etiquette were in the habit of relieving themselves from their filial obligations where these had become exacting by a kind of hocus-pocus. They took refuge in a religious bankruptcy act provided by "the traditions of the elders" according to which if the talismanic word "Corban" was uttered over any material possession which might naturally have been used for the comfort of one's needy parents, the selfish son could retain it without incurring the sense of having violated the commandment of God touching the duty of children to their parents. What a wretched bit of moral shuffling it was!

In seeking to pierce through the thick hide of their spiritual conceit and moral callousness the Master made his words plain almost to the point of offense, but there was cause. "What a man eats," he said, "enters not into his heart but into his stomach and goeth out into the draught. This defiles not the man." But the principles of action which a man cherishes are resident in his heart and when these are selfish, mean and cruel, they defile the man.

By these pungent words he struck at the very root of traditionalism and of ceremonialism. He would have religious observance the fresh expression of the divine spirit as it functions in the hearts of men intent upon worship and service and not a mere load of encumbering usage carried along from age to age unable to vindicate itself by any showing made in terms of spiritual value. He would have the religious life of the day rest its weight upon the manifestation of "righteous-

ness and peace and joy" rather than upon scrupulous devotion to ceremonies and sacraments.

Have we understood and observed all these things? When we make more of the amount of water used in baptizing a man than of the inward purity of his motives or the unselfish devotion manifest in his conduct, then we are again washing the cups and the pots. When we test a minister's claim to spiritual efficiency by the particular method of his ordination rather than by scrutiny of his qualities of mind and heart, we are exalting the traditions of the elders above the spiritual verities involved. God is not worshiped chiefly by men's hands as though he needed any such thing—he is honored by men's hearts where they are possessed of loving obedience toward him and of kindly good will toward all mankind.

XXIII

THE MASTER'S ESTIMATE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Matt. 11: 1-19

John was in prison. He was despised and rejected of men. When he was arraigned by Herod, they esteemed him stricken and smitten of God. But he was wounded for the transgression of others; he was bruised for his valiant devotion to righteousness. He was in the profoundest sense of the word "a forerunner."

He was depressed by his surroundings. He had suffered the sting of unjust treatment. He may well have felt that God had forsaken him. His faith in the speedy fulfillment of the great hopes he had expressed was temporarily dimmed by the harsh treatment accorded him. And it is not improbable that the gentler methods of the Messiah seemed disappointing to one who had pictured the "Coming One" as wielding the "ax" and calling down "unquenchable fire" in a sudden and terrible retribution visited upon wrongdoers. At any rate John was burdened by a sore uncertainty touching the messianic claims of Jesus.

From his prison cell he sent two of his disciples to Jesus with this plaintive query, "Art thou he that should come or do we look for another?" "Another," altogether different in kind, for the word employed is *"eteron,"* not *"allon,"* which would mean another of the same type. John longed for "One that should come," for that ultimate and supreme manifestation of the divine to which reason and conscience might look up and say, "Thy Kingdom come." He was waiting for a final word.

The answer of Jesus is characteristic of his whole method. "By their fruits ye shall know," was the canon of judgment he had taught his disciples. He is content to have his own mission judged by its fruits. He makes no arbitrary claim; he offers no dogmatic statement about his character; he cites no ancient Scripture in support of his title to the office of Messiah. "Go and shew John again those things which we do hear and see." On Carmel it was said, "Let the God who answereth by fire be God." In Galilee it is said, "Let the one who can say, 'The blind receive their sight and the lame walk and the poor have good tidings preached to them,' be accepted as the Coming One." In this twentieth century let the faith which answers in hearts renewed and wills strengthened, in homes sweetened and in whole nations directed toward the higher ends of human existence stand fast and bear rule! The religious claim in any age must submit to the test of achievement.

Here are credentials which can be known and read of all men. It requires an expert to pass upon the intricate philosophical and theological questions which are discussed by the schoolmen. But the testimony of the man who can say, "I was blind, now I see"; the word of the man who can say, "My deaf ears have been unstopped"; the joyous witness of those who by faith in the Son of God are trampling under foot the temptations which once lorded it over their lives: the fine integrity of those who stand up without flinching in the performance of duties which they formerly shirked—this sort of testimony can be weighed and valued by the veriest wayfarer. When men are uncertain as to whether they should accept the One who has come, show them the facts.

It is significant that this recital of results achieved climaxed not in some wonder yet more startling than the opening of blind eyes or the healing of the leper but in the fact that "the

poor have the gospel preached to them." And what is "the gospel" as the Master uses the words here? It is the good news that God loves us and has manifested his love for us in Jesus Christ and because he loves us, we should love one another. Go and tell the poor people that, carrying the effective credential with you in your own attitude toward their need. Let the hungry deprived of an equitable share of the good things they have helped to produce know that they are not forgotten. Wherever this original and effective apologetic for the Christian faith is delivered we witness the steady coming of the Kingdom.

When the messengers had departed Jesus entered upon a sympathetic evaluation of John. The multitudes had thronged to hear him when John preached in the wilderness. "What went ye out into the wilderness to see?" A reed shaken with the wind? A man clothed in soft raiment? A prophet of the current, conventional type? He was none of these. He was "more than a prophet" as his contemporaries lightly used that term. He combined the fierce hatred of wickedness which belonged to Elijah, the uncompromising insistence upon justice of Micah, and the clear, strong sense of spiritual reality of an Isaiah. He was among the greatest born of women.

His greatness, however, was not so much personal as official. He was the immediate forerunner of the Christ, the herald who girded up his loins to run before the chariot of the King. And with his keener insight the Master gives his own searching accurate appraisement of the stern, strong man. "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist, notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." It was the testimony of Christ to the superiority of that order of life he had come to establish. He cordially recognized the greatness of a per-

sonality living under an imperfect preparatory order and then in the same breath asserts the higher worth of that which is to come.

He that is least greater than he! Aye, verily, in immediate personal privilege! The sophomore is greater than Socrates not in personal ability or in present moral attainment but in his opportunities, in the richness of the advantages which surround him, in the very profusion of stimulus and aid for wise and effective action.

The message of the Gospel is a higher and a finer message than that uttered by John. When morally awakened men came to him saying, "What shall we do then?" John's word was, "He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none." "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." "Do violence to no man."

This is good as far as it goes. But how far short it falls of the word found upon the lips of that morally awakened man in the far country who said when he came to himself, "I will arise and go to my father." The life of filial fellowship which stands at the heart of the gospel message opens a vaster prospect to the aspiring soul than is to be found in any word of the great forerunner.

The mode of life enjoined upon us in the Gospel is a higher mode than that espoused by John. "John came neither eating nor drinking." He was an ascetic, dwelling apart in the desert, subsisting on locusts and wild honey, disdaining the ordinary relationships and associations of human intercourse. His life was magnificent as a protest against current evils—it becomes sadly defective when we look to it for a constructive program of action.

"The Son of Man came eating and drinking." He came building his life evenly and steadily into an actual and reason-

able human order. He was a concrete and not an abstract idealist. He took the familiar material of common life and showed its finer implications. He interpreted those relations in which men and women stand and must ever stand on this homely earth, investing them with new dignity and meaning as he revealed their bearing upon the unfolding of a divine purpose. He made men aware of their souls right where they stood and of the needs of those souls and of the unseen sources of supply for that need near at hand until those who believed in him found themselves at home in a world where God the Father is above all and in all and through all.

> "The common problem, yours, mine, every one's,
> Is not to fancy what were fair in life
> Provided it could be but finding first
> What may be, then find how to make that fair
> Up to our means."

It is the everlasting difference between the abstract and the concrete idealist so effectively brought out by William DeWitt Hyde where he sets Plato and Aristotle over against each other in philosophy, Burne-Jones and Watts in art, Wendell Phillips and Abraham Lincoln in the work of reform, Matthew Arnold and Robert Browning in poetry and President Nott and Cyrus Hamlin in the appeal and the conduct of foreign missionary effort. "Plato sees what might be and condemns all that is because it falls short of this. Aristotle sees what is and strives to bring the best that may be out of that."

The stern, strong man whose words had a tang in them like horseradish rendered his own appointed service and entered into his reward. The Master indicated John's spiritual kinship with the rugged Tishbite of old. "If ye will receive it this is Elijah who was to come." Jesus also sensed his appreciation of the valued service which such harsh instruments of the

divine purpose can render. "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force." The men who are veritable Gatling guns in energy are not dispossessed of their blood and iron when they enlist in the Kingdom of Heaven. Their guns are but trained more accurately upon the enemy. "Saul breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" once apprehended of Christ becomes the apostle who in his spiritual passion "could wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh." The violent consecrate their violence and by the sheer force of their aspiration cause the Kingdom to advance.

The Master thus pronounces the final eulogy upon John the Baptist who was soon to suffer a violent death at the hands of wicked Herod. He reserves his full approval for that higher order of life where men do not strive nor cry, where they do not rely upon power or might, but achieve their victories by the supremacy of that Spirit which is divine. "So doth the greater glory dim the less."

XXIV

THE TRAGIC DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Mark 6: 14-29

Herod lived off the turnpike of spiritual effort. He would not readily come in touch with the work done by Jesus of Nazareth. When he first heard, therefore, of this new prophet who was showing himself "mighty in word and in deed," he was troubled. His first thought was—"It is John whom I beheaded—he is risen from the dead."

He was utterly astray in his diagnosis. His own blind superstition and his guilty conscience framed up for him that specter which haunted his hours. His own guilty memories produced the sense of a ghostly presence emerging out of the unseen world to again rebuke him for his sin. "It is John," he whispered in his moral distress. Thus at the feast the troubled heart of Macbeth caused him to see the ghost of Banquo sitting in his own chair which was empty to all eyes but his own. And Lady Macbeth smelled blood on a hand which was as white as her own fair face paled with fear and remorse.

What a testimony to the enduring influence of that moral leader of whom Jesus said, "Among them born of women there hath not risen a greater!" John being dead yet spoke to the consciences of men. The good men do lives in them and after them. It is a striking tribute to the power of personality that the report of these mighty works wrought by the prophet of Galilee should set Herod muttering and whispering his fears as to the reappearance of that stern champion of righteousness who had rebuked him for the evil in his life.

It recalled to Mark the tragic end of the forerunner's life and he here records the grewsome circumstances surrounding the death of John. Herod had taken his brother's wife in defiance of the law of God and man in that land and had made her his own. John the Baptist had withstood him to the face. "It is not lawful," he said, "for thee to have her." He showed his moral courage in thus opposing the pleasure of one who wielded the power of life and of death. But John was not one to flinch. He could arraign the ungodly men of his day, in general terms calling them "a generation of vipers." He could also face the individual and pointing to his sin, say "Thou art the man," which is the harder, the higher and the holier task.

When Nathan stands before David the king denouncing his cruelty and adultery; when Elijah meets Ahab as the oppressor is about to take possession of the wrongfully acquired vineyard; when John Knox voices the conscience of Scotland in his opposition to Queen Mary; and when John the Baptist faces Herod with the stern word, "It is not lawful," we have a prophetic succession ready at its own peril to speak the straight word to the man who needs it most. It is easy to reproach an entire congregation as being "miserable sinners" in whom there is no spiritual health—it is hard to tell some powerful man his fault "between thee and him alone."

Herodias, the guilty partner in the king's crime, would have had the prophet silenced beyond all hope of further utterance. But "Herod feared John knowing that he was a just man and holy." He had John imprisoned yet was unwilling that his wife's anger should put the brave man to death. It was the unwilling and perhaps superstitious tribute which moral cowardice pays to virtue. Therefore in the gloomy fortress of Machærus John was entombed.

But there came a day when Herod celebrated his birthday with a great supper. "The lords, the high captains and the chief estates of Galilee" were gathered at his banquet board. It was a Roman custom at a certain point in the feast "when men had well drunk" to bring in the dancing girls even as the geisha girls form one of the elements of entertainment at showy dinners in Japan. The dancing was imitative and licentious—it bore no relation to the wholesome forms of recreation known to our high-minded youths and maidens. It was commonly done by paid professionals whose trade was such that they had no modesty to lose.

But at Herod's feast when the curtains were drawn and the dancer appeared a thrill of surprise and of ugly gratification possessed the hearts of the half drunken revellers. It was Salome, the beautiful daughter of Herodias! It is probable that she had been urged to make this unseemly display of her charms by her own wicked mother in the prosecution of an unholy design. The jaded appetites of these banqueters were whetted by this fresh sensation and their rude appreciation testified to Herod that he had made a great hit in the entertainment provided.

Heated by wine, intoxicated by their flattering applause, beguiled himself by the wanton dancing of a handsome girl, he burst out in maudlin fashion, "Ask of me whatever thou wilt and I will give it thee." The girl herself was confused and staggered by his wild offer and he repeated it with an oath—"Whatsoever thou shalt ask . . . unto the half of my kingdom!"

Thus aroused to a sense of the greatness of his offer she went out to be coached by her mother. "What shall I ask?" There was something more precious to Herodias than the half of any kingdom and that was the full gratification of her desire

for revenge. "Hell hath no fury like a woman spurned." The stern prophet in yonder gloomy prison had uttered words in condemnation of her sin which scorched her soul. Her answer to the girl's question was swift and cruel. "What shall I ask?" "The head of John." And that there should be no mistake about his having been beheaded she demanded that the head be brought to her "on a platter," served up to her coarse appetite for fierce revenge.

When the dancing girl came with that horrible request the king was exceeding sorry. He had made a wild and dangerous vow. When wine is in, wit is out. When men are inflamed by immodest displays, purposes are formed which issue in actions more base and cruel than extravagant indulgence in meat and drink. He was exceeding sorry yet for his oath's sake and for their sakes who sat with him he would not refuse. Stiff in the pride of his own foolish word and craven in his fear of those evil associates, he lacked the moral courage to make a wise retreat.

How many young men take courses of action which their own judgment and conscience disallow because of a fancied sense of loyalty to some mad vow! The bravado of persistence in a wrong course is not courage nor firmness, but cowardice and pigheaded obstinacy. Happy the open-minded man who is ready to be wiser and better today than he was yesterday or even an hour ago. He gains much by having the courage to make a wise retreat.

Herod would not go back. He sent an executioner to the prison and had John beheaded. He had the head brought on a platter. He gave it to the damsel and the damsel gave it to her mother. Now let the grudge of this guilty woman feed itself fat upon that horrid sight! She had been unwilling to have the promise of Herod that he would execute John, for

on the morrow when he was sober and when his lords and high captains were no longer about him with their flattering applause, he might still recede from his oath.

It is a tragic story! But given a mean and cowardly official dressed in a little brief authority! Given a woman savage and vindictive! Given a prophet who stood as the fearless champion of righteousness facing the wicked pair with the law of God deep written in his heart, and you have all the ingredients for a tragedy! And the working of the moral forces, good and evil, there suggested wrought from those materials this horrible event which has been spread upon canvas and retold in verse with somber effect.

The world cannot spare its supply of men of the type here indicated. The prophet must stand ever and anon in some august presence it may be and say in accents unmistakable, "It is not lawful." When the resources of a country created for the comfort of many are being rapidly, recklessly, wastefully exploited by the few for the few; when the mad race for material gain shows itself without regard for the human values at stake; when under pressure of the desire for large and quick returns the pace of industry is made too sharp for the endurance of the average man; when vast combinations of capital control legislation and the decisions of courts in their own selfish interest, then it becomes necessary for many a prophet of the living God at the risk of his pew rents, if not of his head, to say boldly, "It is not lawful."

In Herod's case it was "the lust of the flesh and the pride of life" in the presence of his riotous companions which impelled him to his evil course. The outer wrappings of evil may change like the passing styles, but the essential spirit of evil abides. The lust of the flesh and the pride of life are still making war upon the finer modes of life. They still strike off

the head of many an impulse toward a nobler course of action. And in the presence of the wanton cruelty of lust and greed and ugly pride, it must be "not peace but a sword."

Herodias thought she had silenced John. But that bloody head upon the platter has spoken to more men and has spoken more potently than did his voice in life.

Herod had his unlawful wife. Herodias had the head of the one whose rebuke had made her wince. The disciples had the mutilated corpse which they took for decent burial. Yet the world is richer and better for the brave, heroic life of that fearless advocate of righteousness, snuffed out though it was in tragic fashion. He was indeed "a radical" in that he laid his ax at the root of the trouble and his rightful successor is needed now on every field of moral effort.

BOOK II

HIS METHOD

XXV

THE RULER'S DAUGHTER

Mark 5 : 21-43

We call him " The Great Physician " because he came to make men whole in the whole sense of that term. He ate with publicans and sinners because they needed him most. He busied himself with the sick because their claim on his compassion took precedence.

As it was then, is now and shall be for years to come, the people came more readily to be healed of their diseases than to be forgiven of their iniquities. We are not to be surprised nor disturbed when the same people today throng the Christian Science Temple because relief is there promised for their headaches and their indigestion while they show themselves reluctant in seeking those profounder spiritual influences which are designed to cure them of their selfishness.

" Behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue." It was the first time that a " ruler of the synagogue " had shown an open interest in the Master's work and all three of the synoptic Gospels remarked upon it. His social position and the fact that his class had been standing rigidly against the work of this teacher of Nazareth made the incident notable. " Have any of the rulers believed on him " — this was the challenge which the ecclesiastics at Jerusalem were able to make long after this occurrence.

But the desperate need of Jairus broke down the barriers of prejudice. The necessity which could not be

met from any other known source sent him to the feet of the Saviour. Luke portrays the desperate situation in a terse, graphic sentence — "He had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a-dying." It was no time to stand on theological ceremony or to insist upon the exclusive items of ritual. The proud ruler of the synagogue fell down at the feet of the Galilean "and besought him greatly. Lay thy hands on her . . . and she shall live." And Jesus at once went with him toward the home of pain.

But on the way he was arrested by another appeal. There was a woman who had been in a pitiable condition for twelve years. She had spent her all on doctor's bills and was nothing bettered but rather grew worse. Her own womanly modesty, the nature of her trouble and the fact of her being ceremonially unclean according to the Levitical law combined to make her unwilling to face the Master openly with an appeal for help. She hoped to creep up behind him unnoticed and gain what she sought — "If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be whole."

It was a blind, ignorant, superstitious sort of faith. It belongs in the same list with the desire to touch the alleged fragments of the true cross or the Holy Coat at Treves or to stand in the grotto at Lourdes made famous by the legend of the appearance of the Virgin. The woman's faith was not orthodox; it was not rational; it was not regular and conventional, but it was real. And because it was real the Master honored it, overlaid though it was with blind superstition. He stood ready to welcome and to reward her imperfect faith and to lead it forth by the right way into something better. The timid, ignorant touch of faith should not fall to the ground unnoticed.

When she touched the edge of his robe Jesus felt immediately that benefit had gone forth from him. His

personal help could not go forth without conscious effort on his part nor without personal cost. "Who touched me?" he said. The touch of faith claiming help for its need had differentiated itself from the careless push and jostle of the street, even as the look of faith and the sincere appeal of thoughtful devotion differentiate themselves from the more general and formal worship of the crowd.

Then the woman, with fearful joy knowing what had been wrought in her, fell down before him and told him the truth. He was content with a simple faith, but it must find open expression. Her confession may have added nothing to her bodily health which was already secured, but it did add to her spiritual joy and to his that she acknowledged the blessing which was hers. And the Master said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." It was not the touch of her hand upon the hem of his robe; it was the faith in her soul which secured the result. And then as she acknowledged the benefit received, the Master bestowed upon her what might be termed "a second blessing." "Go in peace and be whole of thy plague."

What a useful picture of human need asserting its rightful claim upon the divine compassion! "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He was in all points tempted like as we are. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

What a picture as well of that life whose helpfulness was so manifest as to prompt the touch and the appeal of faith! In the light of this occurrence it is for every man to ask himself, "How is human need affected by my presence? When any one meets me incidentally what is the result? What does he rub off of me in his casual contact? How far is he prompted to touch the hem of my mind or my

heart in the hope of receiving help?" It is a tragedy for any life to move among the throngs and in the presence of need and not elicit ever and anon the touch of faith.

The anxious father was sorely tried by this delay but Jesus reassured him — "Fear not, only believe." It is a note which sounds clear and strong throughout the Master's entire teaching. "Let not your heart be troubled — believe in God." "Have faith in God — all things are possible to him that believeth."

When he reached the house he allowed no one to enter the sick room save the parents of the child and "Peter and James and John." He drew around him always in a closer fellowship these three as an inner circle of trusted intimates. On the Mount of Transfiguration, in Gethsemane and in all the greater crises of his life it was the same. There in that sympathetic atmosphere freighted with trust he would work relief.

In all three of the synoptic gospels where this incident is recorded we have the affirmation of Jesus, "The damsel is not dead but sleepeth." This would indicate that this was not a case of raising the dead, but of the reanimation of one in a state of coma. If we insist upon the full strength of the words of Christ when they directly affirm his superhuman power, we are to be no less faithful to such a statement as the one recorded in all three of the narratives. "She is not dead but sleepeth." It is a question here of careful, honest exegesis rather than any dogmatic question as to the possibility of miracles. We shall not exalt the person of Christ by claiming more than may be rightly claimed by painstaking fidelity to the record. The One who said "Ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free," can only be served by fearless and thorough-going loyalty to the truth.

He took the damsel by the hand and said to her,

"Talitha, Cumi — Damsel, Arise." The girl arose and walked, and he directed that something be given her to eat. The people were astonished with a great astonishment. The Master of life and of death, the One competent to heal diseases and to forgive iniquities, had asserted again his sovereign good will in that home of pain and distress.

In both of these narratives the truth is brought out that even the honest mistakes men make in diagnosing that which they fear or in selecting methods of relief when they undertake to bring their need into contact with divine help do not fail of their reward. The best we know of our own lack falls far short of the reality; and the wisest methods we select when we would gain some valued result may seem childish before him with whom we have to do. But where the touch and appeal are those of genuine trust, the sincerity of the attitude rather than the wisdom manifest in the choice of means is regarded.

The hour of need in our human experience becomes a revealing time. We should never have dreamed of the latent courage and patriotism, of the unuttered eloquence and generosity among the quiet farms and in the shops and stores of the North but for the emergency of the Civil War. The son might never have known the intensity of his mother's love and devotion but for the long illness through which she nursed him back to life. The great need clears the field and offers a wide open space that some great deed may come forth and fill it.

The immediate efficacy of Christ's work in these passages is one of its glories. He said to the patient sufferer, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole," and the woman walked away with the elastic grace of healthy womanhood. He said to the girl unconscious in a sleep from which she might not have awaked without his help, "Maiden, arise," and straightway the damsel arose.

You need not postpone the time when you will receive great blessings from the Lord, no, not for an hour. The rewards of Christian service are indeed cumulative — they unfold and enlarge from year to year. But there need be no delay in initiating this process of divine help. "Today if ye will." The Son of Man is on earth and he can forgive sins at once. He is not far from any one of us and when "the Spirit comes upon a man," with his assent and acceptance, he is, according to the promise, "turned into another man."

We live and move in him. His power, his wisdom and his love press us on every side. But his helpfulness now as of old responds only to the touch and appeal of loving trust. His help does not force its way unasked nor fling itself upon the multitude without discrimination. When the personal appeal is made aright then he restores us from our ills, then he causes the life become inert and unresponsive to rise into life abounding and unending.

XXVI

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

Mark 6 : 30-44

This passage if read in midsummer becomes indeed "the lesson for the day." In its opening word it puts the seal of approval upon what so many people are doing at that season. Jesus said to his disciples, "Come ye apart and rest awhile." And they at once departed with him into the wilds.

When some self-appointed mentor censures the tired pastor or the weary Sunday school teacher with the solemn observation, "The devil never takes a vacation," it is enough to say in reply, "We are not followers of the devil — we are followers of Him who said, 'Come ye apart and rest awhile.'" The spirit has its tides no less than the ocean. Where the movement of energy is always outward there comes depletion. There needs to be a time when the life waits for the influx of new power as the bay waits for its infilling by the ocean at the turn of the tide.

The timeliness of the lesson is further increased by the fact that it is the story of an outdoor meal. The people were sitting on the green grass. They were far removed from the ordinary sources of food supply. They were hungry, so that the compassionate heart of Christ was unwilling to "send them away" lest some should faint by the way. And now the same heart of sympathy, which in its concern for the weary disciples had suggested a vacation, showed itself no less alive to the common hunger of an insistent multitude of plain folk.

When Jesus saw the hungry people "he was moved with compassion." When the disciples saw them, they said "Send them away." They would have the hungry go elsewhere to buy themselves food. But Jesus said, "They need not go away — give ye them to eat." The disciples replied, "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread?" The absurdity of it was manifest — they had not that much money in their possession, and there was no such supply of provision on sale anywhere within reach.

Then Jesus said, "How many loaves have you?" They did not know. They went out to investigate. Presently they came back and reported "Five — but what are they?" Still they did not know. They were doing their little sums in arithmetic, leaving out of the account the most significant fact in the situation. They were adding up their little columns of figures, like children at grammar school, as if there had been no "prophet mighty in word and in deed" close at hand.

The disproportion between their own meager resources and the amount of need in that hungry multitude staggered them. It staggered them because they did not dream of the latent possibilities in that situation. They did not know how wonderful the most meager resources may become when they are once brought under the power of an unhesitating consecration to Christ.

Then in the confidence of power Jesus bade the people sit down as for a meal. "And they sat down in ranks"— the Greek word is more picturesque, "in garden beds and garden beds" (for the word is repeated), "by hundreds and by fifties," for convenience in serving. And when Jesus had taken the meager resources of the company into his own hands and blessed them, he gave to his disciples and they distributed to the people who were set down as

much as they would. And to the amazement of everybody, the slender resources sufficed to meet the need of the entire company.

This is the story. It is soon told, but that which is here symbolized in the divine utilization of inadequate resource to meet appalling need is a process the story of which can never be exhausted.

Strike out the word "loaves," which are simply the *x*, *y* and *z* of the problem, the outward symbols of values innumerable! How many loaves of knowledge have you as you face the world of spiritual reality and undertake to instruct your fellows? How much faith have you as you face some bewildering situation or seek to point the way for some other baffled soul? How much strength have you as you undertake to give those struggling lives a friendly lift? How much money have you as you look out upon the unrelieved want of the world? How much goodness have you as you enlist with Him who is seeking to take away the sin of the world?

How much have you of all this? Go and see. And you may come back presently to say, in your humiliation: "How much? Not much — just this. And what is this among so many?"

You may be disturbed by vague longings of your own. You want a more complete physical effectiveness, not for self-indulgence, but for unselfish service. You want a more complete mental unfolding, for you feel stirring within you an unrealized capacity for high and serious thought. You long for a more satisfying fellowship with those who would know you as you are, for that perfect sympathy and congeniality of spirit which belong to companionship on its high levels. You long for a soul purer, truer, kinder than this troubled soul of yours which comes up weary and discouraged from the fret and care of a hard week.

You long for all this, but when you look at your own meager resource you are dismayed. You will be helped beyond a peradventure by a closer study of the feeding of the multitude.

The Master knew what those five loaves were among so many, and he was the only one who did know. The boy who brought the little stock of provision — five biscuits and two sardines, we would put it in our modern Western phrase — was amazed at the result. The disciples were amazed, for they were just learning to spell words of one syllable in that august message of divine help which had come into the world. But the Master "knew what he would do," for he alone knew what he could do.

How amazed many a man is when he sees his own modest store of ability used for the accomplishment of the divine purpose! He knows how meager it is, yet reports come back of genuine service rendered which astonish him. He has been speaking a kind word here, doing a generous deed there, maintaining a certain character for rectitude, holding an attitude of sympathy truly Christian, and no end of good has been accomplished by the use of these simple agencies.

"What am I?" the man said at the beginning of his Christian life. He did not know — no man ever knows. The Master knows because he sees the unrealized capacity in every soul. The perpetual enlargement and enrichment of personality, with powers of service correspondingly increased, which goes on when men live in fellowship with Christ, is to me more wonderful than this story about the loaves and the fishes.

Every great thing, it matters not whether it is an individual or an institution or a movement in which all the nations of the earth may ultimately be blessed, has its hour of unsuspected capacity. It may lie in the manger of

a stable in some little Bethlehem, its future glory all undeclared. It may see a period when it is in danger of being slain by some cruel Herod whom later it could wither with a word. In such an hour the prosaic nature lacking in vision may look in and say, "What is this tiny beginning in the face of obstacles so great?" He knows not the unrealized possibilities of that life which may yet wear a name which is above every name. "What is this?" you ask, touching some modest beginning. Ask Him! He alone is competent to make reply.

The whole story of the loaves and fishes is most reassuring when we are depressed because of the disproportion between the visible efforts we can put forth and the magnitude of our task. Here is the everlasting struggle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. Here is one solitary missionary set down in China, India, Africa, facing the ignorance, the prejudice, the sinfulness of a hundred thousand people who walk in darkness. The present proportion is just about that, one to one hundred thousand — what is he among so many?

Here is one little home missionary church set down in a mining town or a lumber camp in the mountains of Montana or Idaho. There are ten grog shops and half a dozen other places still worse fighting steadily on the other side. What is the little church against such odds!

Here is the unorganized moral sentiment of a community undertaking to fight some strongly intrenched evil! The evil has political pull and money galore and scores of ugly-hearted henchmen who profit by it — what can moral sentiment do against all that? How unequal the contest seems on the face of it!

And yet, inadequate as the forces of light may seem, the hard fact stands that on all the mission fields of earth and all along the frontier in our own land and in those

sections of our cities where the representatives of righteousness stand in the very thick of the fight, men and women like ourselves are coming off more than conquerors through Him who uses weak things to confound the mighty.

"It is a great miracle," as Charles E. Jefferson says, "and it presents a great mystery. The mystery is so great that some men have attempted to explain away the miracle. But their explanations are more marvelous than the miracle itself. If this story of the feeding of the multitude be history, it is indeed strange, but if it be fiction it is stranger still. That a Jewish publican or fisherman should spin in his own inner consciousness a story so graphic and straightforward and then spin an alleged discourse so profound that nineteen centuries of thinking have not yet carried us to the bottom of it, and so nicely attuned to the miracle that word and deed seem but complementing parts of one strain of music, and then create a character on whose lips the discourse does not sound blasphemous and to whose hands the miracle does not seem disproportioned, is of course possible but hardly probable. It is more reasonable to ascribe great deeds to Jesus of Nazareth than such great stories to the men who followed him."

XXVII

THE STORM-TOSSED MEN

Mark 6 : 45-56

The Master had fed the multitude and had sent them away not hungry and fainting but filled. Now he must be fed for he felt that power had gone out from him. Therefore " when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray." He was alone with the Father that his own depleted strength might be replenished.

" The wind was contrary " that night, and the disciples in the little boat made no headway. They toiled in rowing all night until three o'clock in the morning, — " it was the fourth watch in the night," — unable to bring their boat to the opposite shore. The wind was contrary so they could not sail — there was nothing for it but to pull at the oars, and their efforts seemed futile.

" The wind was contrary " — the fundamental fact was against them. There is no tide on the little lake, and it was before the days of steam. The wind, therefore, was the main force to be reckoned with and it was adverse. It could not be changed nor reasoned with — they could only resist its blind, meaningless opposition with their puny strength.

What a picture of the situation in which lives innumerable find themselves! There is some opposing force which cannot be changed nor ordered off; it cannot be climbed over nor crawled under; it will not explain its meaning nor grant a respite for the accomplishment of some worthy purpose. The opposition is there confronting and

baffling the life. For many a soul the night is dark, the sea is rough, and the wind is contrary.

It would be impossible to name all of the contrary winds which men encounter. The stiff breeze of opposition to peace and progress may blow through the rooms of a man's own home. The union which exists there was made with the best intentions, but it was ill-advised, and the wind is contrary for them both. The opposing wind may blow from the stubborn fact of chronic ill health. When the heartbeat is neither strong nor true, when the nerves shriek and bluster in an unnatural excitement, when wholesome food becomes disquieting instead of renewing, because of a disordered digestion, it seems well-nigh impossible for mind and heart to move serenely toward the haven where they would be.

The life may encounter a fundamental opposition in the dreariness and monotony of its toil. The loss of joy and pride in one's work which seems inevitable where a man is doomed to spend his days punching holes in a shoe, or feeding endless material into some huge machine, or weighing numberless cargoes which to him are mere weight and bulk, becomes a serious handicap to the man's advance. In every such case it seems as if the great main fact had arrayed itself in opposition. The men toil in rowing and toil to no purpose.

But there was a silent and sympathetic witness of the struggle the men made. "He saw them toiling in rowing." He was watching from the heights where he had gone to pray, to see how they fared. He is ever watching. He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep while his friends are storm-tossed.

How much it means that there is some one who knows and cares! How much it means to a growing boy fighting his temptations and battling with his reluctance to face

some hard duty if he overhears his father say, "The boy is putting up a good fight — I am proud of him." How much it means that the divine Christ sees us toiling in rowing and at the very hour when we tremble on the verge of defeat stands ready to come with his almighty aid. The fundamental fact in the situation is *not* against us, it is never against us, when we count him in with the factors which determine the issue.

The contrary winds have their high office to fill. It is well for most of us that life is not easy. Life is easy for clams and for those rich men's sons who undertake no business of their own, who never seek to be useful in political life, who lend no hand to philanthropic effort. Life is easy indeed for them, and look at them! There is not much to choose between the clams in their mud-bath and the soft-shelled young men lounging in the clubs, driving their bobtailed horses and saying empty things to the girls. When all the contrary winds are taken away, the life becomes mere pulp.

The sailor becomes a mariner not by paddling his dory about in a quiet mill pond — he does it by launching out into the deep and sailing the high seas in all the winds that blow. The boy knows that his kite will only rise when the wind blows hard against it. It must have the wind seeking to pull it away and the stout string holding it to its course — then this correlation of forces will carry it up. The very difficulties men encounter, the head winds they face, together with the strong kite-string of will, purpose and high resolve in their correlation, carry the personal life surely and steadily upward.

But the value of this opposition in its worthy outcome is heightened by the fact that from the heights the sympathetic eyes of the divine Christ watch over the struggles we make. When the situation grows desperate, he comes

to our relief as he did to the storm-tossed disciples on the Sea of Galilee. When they first saw him they thought it was a ghost, and they cried out with fear. Then he spoke to them and quieted their hearts.

The passage brings to our minds the great company of men who spend their days and their nights upon the sea. The marine statistics of the world show us that there are three millions of these men. They are away from home. They live where there are no churches, no firesides, no pleasant, wholesome places of entertainment. When they come ashore at an occasional port they find vipers awaiting them more hostile and deadly than the one which fastened on Paul's hand when he was shipwrecked at Malta. They are met by "barbarous people" who show them no kindness. The rumseller, the gambler, the harlot, the thief and all the other land sharks are awaiting the sailor that they may rob him of his money and of his manhood.

The life in the "fo'c'sle" is a rough, hard life. The food served up to Jack, the place given him to sleep and the whole setting of his life "before the mast" are calculated to sink the higher instincts and impulses. His very soul is beaten and bruised and storm-tossed by the mode of life which he is forced to accept. His lips may utter rude, blasphemous words, but his deeper need cries out as Peter cried that night to the Saviour, "Lord, help me!" When we remember how God is knitting the nations of the earth up into a new sympathy and a better understanding by travel, by trade, by the whole interchange of thought and substance; and when we remember how necessary the sailor is to this mighty process in the larger civilization, we feel something of the debt of gratitude we owe to the man upon the sea.

The storm-tossed men on the sea were not forgotten in that darkest night — Christ came to them on the water

asserting his sovereign authority and his invincible good will by land and by sea. They must not be forgotten by the followers of Christ. When the offering is taken for the Seamen's Friend Society or for the Floating Work of the Endeavor Society or for some Marine Hospital for disabled sailors or for a Home for their orphans, we can still hear across the waves that appeal which came to the ears of Christ, "Lord, save me!"

When he was received into their boat "the wind ceased and they were sore amazed." And then their arms made strong by his presence and their hearts relieved from fear by his assuring words, they reached their desired haven with a deeper sense of the divine goodness. The contrary winds had brought them a new manifestation of the divine watchfulness and care.

"One ship turns east and another west
With the selfsame winds that blow;
'Tis the set of the sails and not the gales
Which tells us the way to go.

"Like the winds of the sea are the ways of fate
As we voyage along through life;
'Tis the set of the soul which decides the goal
And not the calm or the strife."

Alexander McKenzie of Cambridge was for many years the honored and useful president of the Boston Seaman's Friend Society. In one of his sermons he gave this bit of personal history: "My father was a sailor. I was a boy when he came back from a three years' voyage. The ship had been signaled from far away and a friendly officer of the customs let me go down in his boat to meet her. As we drew near the ship I stood in the bow and at length could see my father leaning over the side of the ship watching our boat. When we came near enough I waved my cap. He saw me and called out to one of the men, 'Throw a rope to my boy.' The sailor threw the rope

and in a few moments the boy was in his father's arms. It was a simple thing, but many a time since have I heard that voice, that command which has become entreaty, and it has become the voice of the Father in heaven watching some child of his who needed to be brought near to him. I have heard the word and loved it and tried to make it God's word to me and the inspiration of my life. 'Throw a rope to my boy.'"

When the Master had brought that boatload of anxious men safe to land, the report of it went everywhere. And the people of that whole region began to carry the sick and the needy of every sort to him that they might at least touch the border of his garment. And as many as were brought into touch with the Christ were helped.

XXVIII

THE GREAT QUESTION

Mark 8 : 27-38

The religious emphasis today is not on creed statement or theological definition. The mood of our time concerns itself more with the manifestation of the religious spirit in humane service. This is undoubtedly an accent of the Holy Ghost but there are other accents. There are diversities of operation by the same Spirit. In the earlier years of Christian history it was inevitable that a large amount of mental acumen and moral passion should be given to the task of sharply marking off from the confusing forms of paganism surrounding it the actual content of the Christian faith.

"Whom do men say that I am?" Jesus asked his disciples. What does the world think of me? What is the current evaluation placed upon my life? The question is necessary and vital. It is a query propounded not by some idle, speculative schoolmen, but by the One who taught men to do unto others as they would have others do unto them, and himself went about doing good. In him there was no divorce of theological and ethical interest. He was unwilling to proceed further with the work committed into his hands until his immediate followers should return an answer to that inquiry, "Whom say ye that I am?" which his own self-knowledge could approve.

There were many who felt that he was a good man, perhaps the best man that ever lived. They felt a profound admiration for his words and his deeds. They said

" He is the equal of John the Baptist or Jeremiah or Elijah, or, in fact, any one of the prophets." These current impressions reported by his disciples, inaccurate though they were, present striking evidence as to the sense of surpassing greatness which attached to him in the minds of his contemporaries. The people of that day who heard his words and saw his life were ready to believe that one of the most renowned leaders of Israel had risen from the dead, appearing among them in a glorified form.

The popular estimate thus expressed testifies to the many-sided character of his greatness. Men according to their varying experiences of his power could find in him the exquisite, brooding tenderness of a Jeremiah or the blood and fire of Elijah the Tishbite. This had a certain limited value, even as the qualified esteem for the Master expressed in some socialist hall or in a slushy magazine article by men who withhold their open allegiance from him has some worth, but its real significance is slight. Jesus was not content to be classified as one among many good men or even as the chief.

The disciples reported that men were placing a varying estimate upon him. " But *ye* — whom say *ye* that I am? " He pressed them for an open, definite declaration of their own convictions as to the rank and quality of the life he manifested. And when Peter, the spokesman for the group, always more ready with his words than the rest, returned an answer Jesus could approve, there fell from his lips that shower of benedictions recorded more fully in Matthew's account of this event — " Blessed art thou, Simon. . . on this I will build."

It may be questioned whether the words of Peter assert the divinity of Christ as we understand that doctrine today — whether they indeed affirm anything more than a strong conviction as to his Messiahship without entering

into the more intricate problem as to his person. If this statement stood unsupported by other and stronger statements made by the contemporaries of Jesus in their effort to account for him, the full doctrine of his deity might never have come to hold the place it has in Christian thought.

But when we study the resolute determination of his followers, themselves members of that Hebrew race, steeped for centuries in the majestic truth of the unity of God, to relate his person to Infinite Being in a manner altogether unique — an attempt never undertaken on behalf of Paul or John or any other great religious leader of that century; and when we find this determination clearly and repeatedly expressed in the Synoptic Gospels, the Fourth Gospel, the Acts and the Epistles, we can readily understand why all the great main branches of the Christian Church, following the lead of those first apostles, have made belief in the divinity of Christ an essential part of their creeds.

In addition to the portrait of Christ as it stands upon the pages of the New Testament embodying the estimate of eye-witnesses of his majesty, there is the history of the Christian Church for nineteen hundred years. The lower conception of Christ as an extraordinary man or as the first of created beings has had its full chance to be heard. Gnostic and Arian, Socinian and Unitarian have offered this lower view to those who were puzzled or repelled by the higher claim. The offer has been made by men altogether winsome in personal character and possessed of unusual power in literary statement.

And what has been the result, taking it by and large? We are not moving here in any realm of metaphysical speculation. We are not examining historical sources so remote as those contained in the pages of the New Testament. We are scrutinizing facts of history which no one

thinks of calling in question. The adherents of the lower view are but a small company. They have failed to command any considerable following or to develop the spiritual vigor possessed by those great branches of the church which hold the higher view. They have failed to show that evidence of an all-inclusive, self-sacrificing moral interest seen in those missionary movements which clasp the whole round world in the arms of spiritual affection. The vaster moral enterprises have been left to those bodies of Christians which hold that Christ is divine.

Theological claims are to be tested by the scrutiny of life as well as by the scrutiny of logic. Men do not gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles even though the thorns and the thistles be planted in ten feet of black loam, well watered and with a southern exposure. The inner something demanded for producing grapes and figs is lacking. And men do not gather the highest and most enduring spiritual results from erroneous claims even though for a period outward conditions may favor. In the course of time the truth has a way of vindicating itself at the bar of experience.

The lower view of Christ's person has not stood the test of use. The men who hold it have shown themselves strong in protest — and the juster elements of that protest have been heard and accepted in the more reasonable orthodoxy held by the evangelical churches of our day — but they have not been successful in creative moral action. The moral passion and spiritual energy which show themselves efficient on the field of foreign missionary effort, in the spread of the Kingdom in unpromising quarters at home and in the production of the necessary volume of unselfish consecration for vigorous church life, have been the peculiar product and property of that larger section of the Christian Church which has sturdily held to the

higher view of the person of Christ. On this he has built and the forces of evil have not been able to prevail against it.

But in the very hour of Peter's great confession the cross was already casting its mysterious shadow upon the splendor of that matchless life. "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and be killed." The pathway of spiritual advance would be a pathway of painful humiliation and of unmeasured self-sacrifice — for him and for his followers. There is no other way. Saving the life by holding it apart in selfish security in the face of the world's need is losing it! The real life is found only as it loses itself by the loving investment of its powers in service.

It was a hard saying for Peter and for the rest. Their heads were full of dreams of an external glory in that coming Kingdom which they believed the Messiah would speedily establish.

Alas, poor Peter! He had just been sent to the head of the class because he had so readily and justly voiced the feeling of the disciples regarding the person of Christ, speaking from a deeper level of conviction and spiritual experience than that represented in the current estimates. And now because in his dull conceit he could not sympathize with the method of Jesus, he is remanded to the foot. He knew how to abound, joyously following his Master's steps in that mighty exaltation to which he had given his personal testimony. He did not know how to be abased in following One who made himself of no reputation, took upon himself the form of a servant and became obedient unto the death of the cross. The metal of Peter's loyalty was untempered, needing yet the fiery discipline to which his genuine loyalty would surely introduce him.

But the manifestation of the glory of unselfish service

and of sacrificial devotion would not be postponed to some other state of being. It would stand revealed, as the eyes of men were gradually opened to the deeper meanings of human existence. There were men standing by who would not taste of death until they had seen the enduring worth and the transcendent beauty of that life which loses itself that it may find itself, revealed with power and great glory.

XXIX

A TROUBLED SEA AND A TROUBLED SOUL

Mark 4 : 35 — 5 : 20

"He maketh the storm a calm so that the waves thereof are still." "With authority he commandeth the unclean spirits and they obey him." In the realm of inanimate nature and in that sphere where the Spirit acts upon spirit there is the same assertion of a Sovereign Good Will.

We may recall in this connection the words of Principal Fairbairn, one of the foremost scholars of our generation: "Once conceive Christ to be the extraordinary person we believe him to be and miracles become to him both natural and necessary. They complete the picture of the divine goodness he manifests, showing that its action in the physical is in essential harmony with its action in the moral sphere."

This whole passage is a hard saying and many there be who cannot receive it. There are difficulties which are not removed either by the attempts of such scholars as Weiss and Beyschlag to rationalize the references to the miraculous or by the labored efforts of those who would take every item in the narrative literally. Jesus of Nazareth "was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people," as was said on the road to Emmaus, and when we stand in his presence we stand perpetually in the presence of mystery.

It ought to be remembered that a generation ago there was a resolute insistence on the part of certain critical

scholars that every reference to the miraculous in the Gospels be read out of court. The progress of medical science in making plain the relation of certain physical disorders to prevalent states of mind and heart and the immediate utility of spiritual forces in the recovery of health has wrought a great change at this point. We now find in that same quarter an almost cordial readiness to admit the "miracles of healing" to respectful consideration as coming easily within the range of what may be deemed probable. It may be that an increased knowledge of the mysterious interaction of mental and physical forces will still further clear the air so that the "nature miracles" which seem to some minds beyond the hope of mercy and outside the pale of serious consideration may also demand a more truly "scientific treatment."

In the presence of the many unsolved mysteries which confront us in the vast system of life and in the presence also of the unique person of Christ which of itself raises an anticipation that the great natural order which enfolded him might have made to him an unwonted response, it is the part of intellectual modesty to await such further light as may come before making a dogmatic pronouncement against these narratives whose spiritual content is so bound up with the most effective redemptive forces in the spiritual history of the race.

I am free to confess that I find it easier to fit the narratives of miraculous healing into my own conception of the general scheme of things than to welcome there the narratives as to the feeding of the multitude, the walking on the water or the stilling of the storm. But given the personality of Jesus Christ as I find it outlined before me on the pages of the New Testament and as I find it pictured in yet bolder lines in the record of moral renewal in all lands through the power of his Name and his Grace for

the last nineteen centuries, I can readily believe that he achieved results both in the realm of inanimate nature and in the realm of sentient spirit which transcend the ordinary categories of cause and effect as at present understood.

In the first of the two narratives contained in this lesson we find the Master wearied by his teaching and by the other labors of the day. His sheer fatigue made it possible for him to sleep untroubled through a storm which caused the waves to beat into the boat. The disciples were amazed at his careless indifference to his own safety and theirs. "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" When they had awakened him, he said, "Where is your faith?" He was less disturbed by the tossing waves about him than by the fickle, troubled hearts of those who in spite of all they had witnessed of his mighty, beneficent power, were still fearful even though they voyaged with him.

But he arose and rebuked the winds. He said, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. Why not? In the last analysis, according to the philosophy which today exercises the most potent influence over the thinking of all serious men who come to close grips with fundamental problems, the ultimate power in what we call "the natural world" is mind or spirit. And Jesus of Nazareth stands to this hour as the supreme manifestation in history of that Power and as its most highly accredited Agent. If the simple narrative here laid before us seems to stagger our belief, no less does his own character and the record of his redemptive efficacy as evidenced in historical events which cannot be gainsaid.

When they reached the other side of the lake they met a raging madman in the country of the Gadarenes. The symptoms recorded in the narratives of these demoniacs seem to fall under three heads — they were the symptoms we would

today attribute to insanity, to epilepsy or to the paralysis of some particular function. The indications here point to insanity. The man was utterly abnormal in his mode of life — " he had his dwelling among the tombs." He showed an unnatural, ungovernable strength in his frenzy — " no man could bind him, no, not with chains." In another gospel it is stated that " he was exceeding fierce so that no man might pass that way." Luke adds that " he wore no clothes." His whole mode of life showed him irrational — " always, night and day, he was in the mountains crying and cutting himself with stones."

" When he saw Jesus afar off," something in the Master's look and bearing drew the sufferer to his feet. " He ran and worshiped him." When asked his name, the wild reply was, " Legion." His mental and nervous disorder was such that he felt as if he were in the grip of a thousand devils. Jesus healed him so that presently his associates to their consternation found him " sitting clothed and in his right mind." However unscientific their former diagnosis may have been in seeking to account for those mysterious nervous and mental maladies which baffle the knowledge and skill of our leading medical men to this hour, they recognized the fact that restoration meant being once more in his " right mind."

Now there was a herd of swine feeding on the steep cliff which rises abruptly from that side of the Lake in the country of the Gadarenes. And at that juncture " the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea and were choked in the sea." It seems altogether probable that some extraordinary frenzy on the part of the insane man just before he was restored to his right mind frightened the swine and led to their stampede over the edge of the cliff and to their destruction in the sea.

The witnesses of these strange events introduced a

causal connection between the two events which does not commend itself to the sober judgment of most scholars in our day. The insane man was healed and the herd of swine ran over the edge of the cliff and was drowned. But the attributing of the man's mental disorder to demoniacal possession and the attributing of his cure to the passing of the devils from the body of the man into the bodies of the swine with the implications regarding the strange Eastern doctrine of the transmigration of souls from human bodies into animal forms (a notion to which our Scriptures nowhere else give the least indorsement), would seem to be the inaccurate interpretation of the two events due to the imperfect knowledge of that period.

The fact that a certain recognition of Jesus as the Son of God is attributed to these demoniacs here and elsewhere would seem to have little significance. If we accept the words at their full face value we would not think of going for a certification of the deity of our Lord to the words of demoniacs.

But here was the man who an hour before had showed all the symptoms which belong to insanity in its most violent form sitting clothed and in his right mind! Here he was so moved with awe and gratitude for his recovery that he besought Jesus that he might go with him as a personal attendant and disciple! What better evidence could we have of "a right mind" and of a grateful and obedient heart! The storm had ceased in his troubled nature also and there was a great calm. What manner of man is this? The wind and the sea obey him. He commandeth the maladies of men and they become submissive to his power.

But Jesus suffered him not! "Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." It was humane counsel — the nervous sufferer

would more easily become established in a normal life by the quiet of his own home than under the perennial stimulus and excitement which attended the public ministry of Jesus. It was also a politic word, for the Master shrank from being known mainly as a wonder-worker. It was also the command of a wise spiritual director — there in the country of the Gadarenes so little influenced by the ministry of Jesus and his disciples, the grateful man would find his best chance for rendering that useful service which would make for his own growth in grace.

Here in this passage we find the Master teaching by word of mouth and by mighty deed! He saves to the uttermost and to the outermost. He finds a joyous warrant for the stormy voyage across the troubled lake in the opportunity which offered to bring peace and joy to a troubled heart. He maketh the storm a calm. He replaceth the spirit of fear with power and love and a sound mind.

XXX

THE CHRIST AND THE CHILD

Mark 9 : 30-41; 10 : 13-16

Human nature is human nature everywhere. The proud, fond mother may speak English and live in the twentieth century or she may speak Hebrew and live in the first; in certain essentials she is the same original fact in both cases. She is happy in the possession of her children and she is ready to believe that this supreme interest of her life will be shared by those she meets.

The Master was at the height of his popularity. Everybody was talking about him, discussing what he had done last, wondering what he would do next. He was healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, causing the lame to walk, preaching good tidings to the poor. His very touch was supposed to have a miraculous effect. These mothers with their little ones in their arms coveted every possible benefit for them, as all good mothers do. They pressed their way through the crowd to ask the Master to touch their children and bless them.

The disciples rebuked them for their presumption. They were undertaking to intrude upon the attention of the Master such trivial interests as little children. These grown men in their mature wisdom understood perfectly that Jesus could not concern himself with little children, no matter how much their mothers loved them. He was the Lord and Master of grown-up people like themselves. He came to address adults and to busy himself with the serious concerns of the mature.

The disciples, therefore, rebuked the mothers who seemed overfond of their own babies, and tried to send them away. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased. "Suffer the little children to come unto me," he said; "forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven."

Keep the way open for the children! Keep the way open into the fullest measure of opportunity here symbolized by the outstretched arms of Christ! Keep the way open for every child to come freely into the highest privileges, physical, mental, moral, which a civilization called Christian can provide! Let no adult prejudice, no stupid ignorance unwilling to study the psychology of the child, no selfishness exalting its own ease and pleasure above the demands of the immature life, no greed ready to grind up the puny strength of the undeveloped into hasty profits, stand in the way of the normal unfolding of every child into its best!

It is a far-reaching word with tremendous content. "Suffer the little children to come!" We may be sure that all ignorantly or wickedly devised plans to retard the advance of the child into all that the Master had in mind in his gracious invitation will have against them the full strength of the One who has taken the moral government of the world upon his shoulder.

We are moving in this august matter — slowly and tardily, but moving. The vital interest of "Christian nurture" is being lifted by a more thorough and generous interest in the work of the Sunday school to that high place which Horace Bushnell, always a generation or two ahead of his own time, gave it in his wise appraisal. We are actually coming to believe that if wise church policy ordains that trained sopranos and altos, tenors and basses may fitly be employed on generous terms to sing the ma-

ture into the land of promise, it may be permissible to draw upon the church treasury to employ a man trained and expert in such matters to give his entire time to the organization and administration of a Sunday school where character is setting in the responsive lives of boys and girls. How lacking in skill and insight have been many of our awkward efforts in this high undertaking! And all the while the Master was saying to every church which bears his name, "Suffer the little children to come unto me."

The full strength of public opinion is moving in the direction of better laws regarding child labor to safeguard the soft flesh of the child from the horny hand of greed. The unscrupulous employer may hold a big dollar so close to his ear as to shut out the feeble, plaintive cry of the child who is being worked too soon and too hard. But today in community after community that cry is being caught up and re-enforced by the manly voice of Christian sentiment issuing from tens of thousands of throats as a bugle call for the advance of a more humane practice. "Suffer the little children to come to their best" — this word is with power and it will make itself felt until the present disgrace of child labor shall be wiped from the fair face of our land.

There are men who scoff at this agitation against child labor. I fear that their eyes are more upon the cash-book than upon the teachings of the New Testament. Some of them went to work when they were eleven or twelve years old and they have been earning their livings ever since. "Look at us," they say, "we were thrown on our own resources early in life when there were no child labor laws butting into the business of practical men; and we have succeeded."

But they were men of exceptional energy and capacity

from the start — their careers furnish no general principle for society generally. It would be in the highest degree absurd for me to go to some unfortunate weakling who by heredity, environment and lack of training has never had a fair chance for a sound body, a clear head and an honest heart, and say to him: "Here, you poor scrub! I can behave myself and take care of myself and have strength left for other loads — why cannot you?"

No man who grows rich by exploiting the labor of boys and girls can ever quite close his eyes to the iniquity of the proceeding. He may be ever so obtuse morally, but there will come hours when the shame of it will burn like a hot iron. When he sits at an open fire in the luxury of his own home he will see there in the grate the burned-out energies of breaker boys working at the mouth of the mine. When his wife and daughters rustle into the room clothed in silk and lace the very luxury of their appearance will whisper to him of immature lives gone down in defeat under the pressure of their ill-timed toil.

No matter though they were willing to be employed and had the consent of selfish or short-sighted parents (themselves thrust out of their natural employment, it may be, by the presence of the cheap child labor), the man who has profited by it will be conscious of the selfish cruelty of such a policy. "It were better," Jesus said, compassionate though he was, "that a man who causes a little child to stumble and fall should have a millstone tied about his neck and be cast into the sea." This would be a good text to have framed and hung at the "Employés Entrance" of some of our factories which profit by the tragic undoing of the immature.

In the light of this passage hear the words of prayer which Walter Rauschenbusch would put upon the lips of men: "O Thou great Father of the weak, lay thy hand

tenderly on all the little children on earth and bless them. Bless with a sevenfold blessing the young lives whose slender shoulders are already bowed beneath the yoke of toil. Suffer not their little bodies to be utterly sapped and their minds to be given over to stupidity and vice. Grant all employers of labor stout hearts to refuse enrichment at such a price. By the Holy Child that nestled in Mary's bosom; by the memories of our own childhood's joys and sorrows; by the sacred possibilities that slumber in every child, we beseech thee to save us from killing the sweetness of young life by the greed of gain."

On another occasion Jesus asked his disciples what they had been discussing, for he saw the marks of angry contention graven upon their faces. "They held their peace" — they were ashamed to tell. They had been disputing as to which one of them should be the greatest in the Kingdom Jesus was to establish. Peter and James and John had been taken with Jesus into the chamber of death in the house of Jairus and into the mountain top of glory when Jesus was transfigured — they had been accorded a certain pre-eminence. James and John had filed their petitions for places on the right and left hand of the seat of power; and Peter had been called a "rock" of strength in the new Kingdom. But who would be *first?*

The Master was ashamed of them — when they saw the look in his eyes they were ashamed of themselves. He said: "If any man would be *first* let him be *last* — let him become a servant. Among the Gentiles the 'great' ones exercise lordship and dominion. It shall not be so among you. Here the greatest of all is the servant of all."

Here was the death knell of that foolish theory that the greatest man is the man who can compel the largest number of people to serve him! Here is the dawn of a day when the only valid aristocracy will be one of high service.

If any man would rise let him stoop to serve! If any would be exalted let him take upon himself the form and the mood of the servant!

Then Jesus again took a child and set him in the midst, as a fit embodiment of that spirit which enables men to enter and to advance in his Kingdom. "Of such is the Kingdom," he said. Modesty, humility, simplicity, gentleness, teachableness, responsiveness — these are the leading traits of normal childhood — and these indicate the path by which mature men may enter the Kingdom.

"He took them up in his arms and put his hands on them and blessed them" — a gracious, personal, exalting service rendered by the Highest to the simplest! Let this sight symbolize the gracious protecting, uplifting attitude which Christian society is to take toward these little lives completely at our mercy and committed to our care."

XXXI

THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE

Matt. 9 : 35-38; 10 : 34-42

"Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching, preaching, healing." Here we have the original trinity of redemptive agencies familiar today on all the mission fields of earth. Teaching, preaching, healing, the school, the church, the hospital, the schoolmaster, the minister and the physician, projecting the Christian energy into every place whither he himself would come!

"When he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion. They fainted — literally were 'mangled, rent, fleeced' — and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. He said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plenteous — the laborers are few.'" He recognized his own inability to touch all those needy lives. He therefore undertook to multiply himself. He began that process in spiritual arithmetic which should continue unto the accomplishment of his perfect will. He multiplied himself by twelve, then by seventy, then by three thousand. And the end is not yet — the process is still in operation. As the Father sent him, he will send and send and send until by this utilization of consecrated personality all shall come to know him from the least to the greatest.

The disproportion between the possible harvest to be reaped and the number of effective reapers oppressed him. He urged his followers to pray that additional laborers might be sent forth. The same urgency exists today as witnessed by the showing made in such books as John R.

Mott's "Future Leadership of the Church." It is imperative that parents and pastors alike should have upon their hearts the sense of responsibility for turning strong, capable, devoted young men into the work of the Christian ministry. There are splendid rewards and honors awaiting young men in law, in medicine or in the work of education, in commerce, in manufacturing or in engineering. And into these callings strong and useful men are going in such numbers that no cry of need is coming back. But in every branch of the Christian Church in every state of the Union there is a loud call for more young men of sound health, good sense, trained intelligence, social sympathy and genuine character to enter the ministry and furnish the needed spiritual leadership. "Pray the Lord of the harvest that he send forth laborers."

When he called the twelve "he gave them power." It was not official, it was personal. He gave them power to heal and power to cast out the unclean spirit. He gave them through their intimate sense of fellowship with him the spiritual dynamic which made them efficient.

He continued all night in prayer to God in preparation for this action. He saw in this selection of personal representatives the first decisive step in the expansion of his work to the point where he should have established a universal religion. He was making ready to say, "Go ye into all the world." He was naming men who should sit on twelve thrones of spiritual influence in Israel, bear witness to the uttermost parts of the earth and have their names inscribed at last on the foundation stones of the city of God.

He was praying for those twelve men in this new and strange experience. They had been ears in their relation to him — now they were to be lips. His truth had been their lesson — now it was to be their message. He had

been saying to them, "Come," "Follow," "Learn of me." Now they must "go," "teach" and "disciple" other men. The word of Jesus opened a new door in each man's life transforming the disciple into an apostle.

They were to begin with the duty that lay nearest. They were not to go into the way of the Gentiles nor into any city of the Samaritans, but "rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The way to gain personal character and to evangelize the world is to do the thing which needs doing right at hand. Men are not called from Troas over into Macedonia to help a new continent into the light until they have rendered useful service in that part of Asia where they were born.

This charge gave them the simpler task first. The conversion of Samaritans and of Gentiles raised intricate questions demanding experience and maturity for their solution. The Master wisely reckons with our slowly developing powers.

The next charge had to do with their message. "As ye go preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." They were to accompany this proclamation with adequate credentials by healing the sick, and casting out the unclean spirits. They were both to proclaim and to utilize that system of spiritual forces which once put in operation makes for health, for sanity and for holiness.

The word "kingdom" is a key word in the teaching of Christ and he made it central in the message of his apostles. He laid it on the lips of those he taught to pray — "when ye pray, say, Thy kingdom come." He bade men "seek first the kingdom." He stood before Pilate with the death sentence impending, speaking still of "My kingdom." The imperial quality of the term broadens the sympathies of every true Christian until they become world wide. The Christian Church is watching to see the Son of Man

coming in his kingdom; it is intent upon having the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord; and it will never conclude its prayer until it can say, "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory."

The twelve men were to rely for their support upon the gratitude of the people to whom they ministered. They were to have the confidence of husbandmen in the good seed they carried. They would sow to men in spiritual things with the glad assurance that they would reap in material things a return adequate for their need. They were to trust to the good instincts of their hearers, confidently leaving to them the practical recognition of the fact that "the laborer is worthy of his meat."

The twelve men were to live such lives that their presence in any home would be a benediction. They would convey the peace and grace of God by their very approach. "As ye enter into the house . . . let your peace come upon it." The genuine Christian as he goes straight along about his Master's business, conscious of his high commission pronounces not in formal words but in vital influence his own benediction on every house able to receive it.

Where their ministry was declined and the offer of divine truth refused they were to make a dignified protest — "As ye go forth out of that house or city shake off the dust of your feet." It was not to be an expression of petty resentment or personal disappointment — it was to be "for a testimony." The touchiness of the ecclesiastic who fancies that any lack of deference to him is an affront to God and a grieving of the Holy Spirit is one thing, but the decorous protest uttered upon seeing some man or some community entering upon a wrong course is quite another.

There is a testimony of protest and of warning no

less than of promise and encouragement. This paragraph from the high commission which began with the hopeful announcement, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," looks out solemnly at its close on the backs of those who had refused the message. "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city."

And then as a climax to this ordination address the Master laid down the doctrine that God is ever mediated to us in terms of personality. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." This statement affirms in reverse order the various steps in that spiritual process indicated where Jesus said, "As the Father hath sent me, I send you." He would bridge the whole distance between the lowest form of human need and the highest help of heaven by flesh and blood yielding itself to divine grace.

"The tabernacle of God is with men" — with those men who do not exclude but welcome him to the fullest participation in their lives. The spirit of God functions in the life of a devoted man as it does nowhere else in the visible creation. The lines and features of that Ineffable Face which no man has seen at any time nor can see, look out from the faces of Christians who stand unveiled in the presence of the divine glory until they are changed into the same image. And because this is true, to receive a true disciple of Christ into the life as a personal force is to receive the spirit of Christ, and to receive the spirit of Christ is to come into filial relations with the Eternal Father.

Jesus would have the sacramental value and significance of these human relations recognized even to the slightest detail. If any one would give a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple (that is in the right spirit), he

would not fail of his reward. When one takes the tiniest sunbeam in the remotest corner of the universe and begins to follow it, he is headed straight for the center of the solar system. When one receives and begins to live by that spirit of unselfish devotion which may find expression in the simplest occurrences of daily life, he is in line to receive and to know the One who is the source of all love.

"Love one another for love is of God. Every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God." The heart of love shows the family resemblance. It does not need to appeal to any coat of arms or heraldry to establish its relationship.

The letter of this commission contains local details and counsels for the day, but the spirit of it moves above time or place. It is addressed to every soul called to aid in establishing the kingdom. Every Christian is "sent forth." If he has "learned" of Jesus as a "disciple" he must now "go and teach" as an "apostle." And in this high undertaking the One to whom all power has been given will be with him even unto the consummation of the age.

XXXII

THE PENITENT WOMAN

Luke 7 : 36-50

The Master uttered his clearest warnings against and pronounced his severest condemnation upon two cardinal and capital sins. They were not the coarse sins of the flesh which respectable people can so easily avoid and condemn. The two sins which called forth the gravest words from our Lord were these, inhumanity and the uncharitable spirit. He seemed to feel that the greatest peril among those he addressed lay at these two points rather than in those coarser forms of wrongdoing into which men are suddenly betrayed by temper or passion. The cold-hearted, selfish sin of inhumanity and the proud Pharisaical attitude devoid of charity, these were the moral defects to which he gave his most serious attention.

The lack of charity for the moral failure of others works terrible results. "Whose soever sins ye retain, *they are retained.*" What you bind on earth is ofttimes bound in the realm of moral permanence. The girl who has slipped from the path of purity is hardened by the world's scorn into brazen effrontery. The contempt of society makes her defiant until she flings back that scorn in her own contempt for the decencies of life. Society shuts the door in her face with a slam until she bows to its harsh verdict and goes upon the street. Honorable employment is denied her because of her slip and she accepts "Mrs. Warren's Profession" as the last alternative. And in less than five years on an average, according to the terrible findings of the

Commission on Vice in Chicago, her body, become a thing of loathing even before she died, is in the cemetery and her soul is — where?

That harsh and hasty attitude toward the girl when she first steps aside from the path of purity is devilish. It would more offend the soul of him who spoke those plain words about the sin of inhumanity and the unforgiving spirit than would the coarser sins against which we can so fiercely inveigh. And thousands of such girls have been sent down sharply and swiftly into physical, social and moral hell who might have been recovered to lives of honor, usefulness and happiness by the wise and patient mercy which finds expression in such beneficent institutions, for example, as the Talitha Cumi Home in Boston.

How long will it take the world to learn that scorn never recovered a guilty soul from the grip of evil. Satan does not cast out Satan — he cannot. The Beelzebub of uncharity and inhumanity does not cast out devils — that spirit is the prince of devils and its house is not divided against itself. If any one is overtaken in a fault you who are spiritual — for you are the only ones who can — restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, steadily considering yourselves lest you also be tempted. Whose sins ye remit they are remitted! The power of absolution and moral recovery belongs to Christian society as it learns the wise exercise of sympathy and the energy of its own expectant faith in the latent moral capacity of those who have failed.

Here in the lesson we have life-size moving pictures of these moral principles. We see them in action. Simon the Pharisee, haughty, supercilious, withholding in grudging fashion the common courtesies from the guest he had bidden to his home because of his fancied superiority to this

humble man of Nazareth, furnishes us a full-page, life-size illustration of how it ought not to be done.

The chivalry of the Christ even toward the woman who had forfeited her rightful claims to consideration by her infidelity to womanly ideals and his oft-proclaimed message of hope for those who had failed drew to his feet a woman of the town. The personal atmosphere of moral recovery which he bore with him drew all manner of need within its range.

"Behold a woman in the city who was a sinner" (personally and professionally "a sinner," Luke says in the designating word he chose) "stood at his feet weeping." Her name is withheld, thus delicately veiling her identity — it was enough that she was "a woman" in distress.

The woman had been morally awakened by some word or look of the Master and now she stole in with a bottle of fragrant ointment, purchased, it may be, alas! for an unholy use. She came to anoint his feet as an act of gratitude. The fact that she wetted his feet with her tears was no part of her plan, but when she actually approached the One to whom she owed so much her feelings overcame her. Her tears fell upon the Master's feet until vexed with herself at this display of emotion she brushed them away with her hair.

Then the haughty Pharisee thought and felt and looked and all but said — "This man if he were a prophet would have known what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner." This uncharitable attitude called out the Master's parable of the two debtors, one to whom much was forgiven and the other but little, with the varying results in the measure of appreciation shown. And then he made a telling application of the principles involved to the moral situation immediately at hand.

Luke more than any other of the Gospel writers was a lover of the bold contrast, the striking antithesis, in the

portrayal of some mighty truth. He loved to hang two pictures on his wall, which by their contrasting lights and shades would bring out in effective fashion the lesson he would teach.

In this narrative we find the companion portraits of the haughty Simon and the penitent woman. "I entered into *thy* house" with all the claims of an invited guest — the woman came in from the street! "Thou gavest me no *water*" — "she hath washed my feet with her *tears*." "Thou gavest me no kiss" upon the *cheek* after the manner of the East — "she hath kissed my *feet*." "My *head* with *oil*," the cheap, common olive oil is indicated by the word employed — "thou didst not anoint" — "she hath anointed my *feet*" with costly and fragrant "*ointment*."

How the words stand out in bold relief, each one making clearer the full implications of its fellow! House — street! Water — tears! Head — feet! Oil — ointment! It was left to this woman of the town, scorned by the respectable Pharisee, to enter unbidden and to supply the lack left by his rudeness. She did the honors of his house to his own invited guest. She gave of her best to the One who had opened for her the door of hope.

A great sinner and a great Saviour! And as a consequence of the relation into which human need and divine help were here brought, a great gratitude! This gratitude found such beautiful expression as to make this passage a classic of penitent devotion.

"The publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you." It was no wild threat or empty boast as to the possible efficacy of that redemption which he was to accomplish. Here in actual life his word was fulfilled before their eyes. The publicans and harlots enter the Kingdom not in their vileness but forgiven and renewed. The sense of utter helplessness impelling them to cast themselves

unreservedly upon the divine mercy makes the way of spiritual advance plain before their feet and they enter ahead of those whose respectability obscures recognition of their own spiritual lack.

There are three ways of viewing evil. There is first of all the hard way, the wooden way. The followers of this method see nothing but the law of righteousness and the act of disobedience. They make no allowance for human weakness, for long-continued temptation, for mitigating circumstance. They are commonly people who have never sinned (as they think), never wavered, never doubted, never feared, never loved, never lived. There is no hope nor help for those who have done wrong, with such as these.

In the second place, there is the lax way of viewing evil. There are people who show an indiscriminate leniency. "It all comes in the day's work," they say, "the good and the bad, and it is all pretty much alike." Evil is not so very bad — it is only good in the making, one of the "growing pains" of character. "The drunkard reeling down Holborn is nevertheless engaged in a mistaken quest for God," as one famous exponent of this roomy doctrine had it. The friends of moral concession mix their colors until there is neither black nor white — only gray. And there is no hope nor help for the guilty in this mush of concession and sentimentality.

There is the third view of those men and women who never forget that the difference between right and wrong is as wide as the space between heaven and hell. The difference between a good man and a bad man is like the difference between a sheep and a goat — the goat is a different sort of animal altogether. They would never think of suggesting that there was not much to choose between Mary, the mother of Christ, and this woman of the street in Simon's house.

But they have also a kind of spiritual clairvoyance for something in each life better than its immediate showing. And this ability to see and to summon forth that better self gives them their power to save. His recognition of the capacity for holiness in every life gave Christ a wondrous power of securing some initiative on the part of the life he would redeem, and when that awakened effort was allied with his own mighty grace victory was sure.

"Her sins which are many are forgiven for she loved much." Her sins were not forgiven because she loved much — they were forgiven because she forsook them and confided in the divine mercy. Then "she loved much" because of the forgiveness experienced.

What a mighty testimony to the redemptive power of the Son of God is this straightforward narrative! The well-nigh hopeless condition of these unfortunate and guilty women baffles the love and skill of modern effort, and the Master's success testifies to the greatness of his power. He said as one having the authority which is grounded in achievement, "Thy faith hath saved thee — go *into* peace." He would have this newly awakened soul embark on an endless voyage into the deeper and ever deeper peace and joy of acceptance with God.

XXXIII

JUDGMENT AND MERCY

Matt. 11 : 20-30

Behold, then, the goodness and the severity of the Master! Here are words of warning which bite and sting! "Woe unto thee, Chorazin and Bethsaida!" If the mighty works done in thee had been done in Tyre and Sidon they would have repented long ago. It shall be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom than for thee. Here are words of tender sympathy and gracious invitation. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls." The same affectionate interest now warns and now invites.

The cities of Galilee here named enjoyed high privileges. They saw the lame walk and the blind receive their sight. They saw the poor receive the good news and the hearts of men renewed by that message of grace which had come to their world. And they were to be judged in the light of the privileges they enjoyed. When communities or individuals walk at high noon, with the sun shining upon them in its full strength, their conduct is not to be measured by such a rule as might justly be applied to the showing made by Tyre and Sidon in the moral twilight they knew.

The people who live in glass houses or in a glass world where the light of heaven streams in must accept the full responsibility which goes with high privilege. If they fail to respond, they are strictly judged — they are automatically judged. The light and warmth which make the fields green under right conditions parch them to dust when

conditions are wrong. The influences which soften and refine the heart harden it when resisted.

It is for every city and for every citizen to know the day of his visitation. "Mighty works" are being wrought today by prayer, by the quiet devotion of faithful lives, by churches genuinely set upon the spiritual renewal of the common life. The results achieved are not blazoned abroad in headlines and red ink as are the incidents of scandal and crime. But they are not done in a corner. The man who has eyes can see. The man who has ears can hear. And it is the business of Chorazin and Bethsaida, of New York and San Francisco, of all the cities of Galilee and of all the cities of America, to know these "mighty works." If we fail in our response, it may be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for us.

It has been said by one careful observer of our American life, "The criticism of the next generation upon this will be, 'How plainly they saw their problems, how ineffective they were in solving them.'" If there be no honest effort to translate visions into deeds, it were better not to have seen the visions. Seeing which is not followed by doing becomes a kind of mental and spiritual dissipation, not one whit more honorable than physical dissipation by the use of stimulants or opiates. The great truth yields its full value only as we undertake to express it in terms of life. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." If mighty works of spiritual achievement are available for our inspiration, and we pass by in thoughtless, careless indifference, then woe unto us.

Here between the warning and the invitation is interjected one of those brief prayers which fell ever and anon from the lips of Christ. There are only three sentences of it — it is quite unlike what is called sometimes with painful and discrediting accuracy "the long prayer" at morning

service — but it touches the deeper levels of spiritual experience and sweeps a wide horizon of religious outlook.

"Hid from the wise and prudent — revealed to childlike and uncalculating souls!" There may be an intellectual thoroughness standing detached from other honored faculties of perception which misses the deeper truths of life. There may be a prudent estimating of life's values with all the painstaking exactitude of the multiplication table which nevertheless results in a sorry and misleading evaluation.

Then comes that tremendous sentence bearing upon the person of our Lord: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." The deep significance of this verse, which stands also in the same connection in the tenth chapter of Luke, is clearly recognized by Biblical scholars. The *International Critical Commentary* has this to say of it: "It is impossible upon any principles of criticism to question its genuineness or its right to be regarded as among the earliest materials made use of by the evangelists. And it contains the whole of the Christology of the Fourth Gospel. It is like 'an ærolite from the Johannean heaven,' and for that very reason causes perplexity to those who deny the solidarity between the Johannean heaven and the Synoptic earth."

And Professor Sanday of Oxford says, further: "This passage is one of the best authenticated in the Synoptic Gospels. Yet once grant the authenticity of this passage and there is nothing in the Johannean Christology that it does not cover." In the face of the tendency to drift into a lower conception of the person of Christ it is well to ponder these facts.

When we see those gracious words, "Come unto me all

ye that labor and are heavy laden," on the printed page or hear them read from the pulpit, we can scarcely separate them from the noble strains of music to which they are set in Handel's "Messiah." How many hearts have been helped in their weary quest when that message has been borne out to a listening congregation upon the voice of a clear, pure soprano!

When Jesus says, "Come unto me," he invites the movement of the personal life toward that which is central, fundamental, vital. He has the right to say "Come." When we take the essential qualities of his life and esteem them divine, lifting them to the supreme place in our thought, we are not misled. He is competent to stand at the center of the whole movement for spiritual advance. When we have seen him, we have seen the Father.

It is the call of the laboratory method. The scientific man does not stand outside the door, developing from his own inner consciousness or from the hearsay of the street *a priori* theories as to how certain chemicals should react. He goes straight into the laboratory and makes the experiment for himself that he may speak with the authority of first-hand knowledge.

The man who is truly scientific in his religious method does not view the subject from across the street or from the seat of the scornful or from the rear pew in some dimly lighted building. He accepts the invitation and enters the spiritual laboratory. He takes the materials of religious experience into his own hands and into his own heart that he may know what religion may mean to the inner life. "Come unto me . . . and learn of me." This is the only way we can learn. The way to learn is to do. The child learns to walk by walking with many a faulty step and tumble. He learns to speak by speaking with much bad syntax and awkward rhetoric at the start. And men learn

to know spiritual realities by making them matters of personal experience.

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." The "rest" named here was no idle surcease from toil — the word "yoke" is uttered in the same breath. Rest does not mean death. It means rather the renewal of power, the invigoration of all the energies of life for further and more effective effort. If any life, weary and heavy laden, feels that the will has gone lame, that the conscience is dulled, that the moral vigor is unequal to the demands made upon it, let it come unto him that in personal fellowship it may find renewing and invigorating rest. In fellowship with Christ there is developed the sense of poise, of balance, of moral adequacy to one's tasks.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn." Wisdom comes not solely nor mainly through reflection — it comes most of all through action. The yoke is made for two necks and for only two. When we are yoked up and yoked in with the Master we learn the deeper lessons of life by the very intimacy of our fellowship with him through the sharing of a common service.

"Take my yoke . . . and ye shall find rest." The coupling of such terms as "yoke" and "rest" seems paradoxical. But the secret of Jesus is conveyed again and again in those paradoxes which startle and then repel and then, studied more deeply, yield the true philosophy of life. The man who "loses" his life in the way Christ indicated does for the first time in his history really "find" it. If any man would be truly tall he must learn to stoop; if he would be great he must serve. "His service is perfect freedom" and there is no other liberty worth the name. Take his "yoke" upon you and you will find "rest" for your soul.

How much nobler and how much truer to the facts is this method than that proposed by the wearied singer of the ancient psalm: "Oh, that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest." He saw the pain and the evil, the struggle and the sorrow of the world, and it wearied him. He wanted to escape. He prayed the prayer of the quitter and sought his rest in flight.

The Master saw the same world full of pain and evil, full of struggle and sorrow. He saw the sad lot of the weary and the heavy laden. He did not pray for wings that he might fly away. He did not pray that his followers should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept. He knew that nothing is ever gained by cowardly retreat. We must have it out with these temptations and obligations right here. He therefore bade men enter into personal fellowship with him that they might come off more than conquerors.

XXXIV

THE BLIND RECEIVE THEIR SIGHT

Mark 10 : 46-52

In one of the great Messianic passages of Isaiah the hope of Israel was thus declared. "Behold my servant in whom my soul delighteth — I have put my spirit upon him. He shall not cry nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed he shall not break nor quench the smoking flax. He shall not fail nor be discouraged until he shall have set justice in the earth." And then as the very climax of his beneficent ministry to human need he would "open the blind eyes and bring prisoners out from the prison and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." Here at Jericho that word was fulfilled in the presence of a multitude!

"They came to Jericho and as Jesus went out with his disciples and a great multitude, a blind beggar was sitting by the wayside." He was blind and he was poor. He sat in darkness and waited in sore want. His case was most pitiable, for he seemed to be entirely cut off from the brightness and the gladness of the common life.

The very approach of Christ seemed to call out need. When he sat at Simon's house, the woman whose sins were many, whose need of forgiveness was great, was drawn to his feet in penitence. When he edged his way through a crowded street, robed in helpfulness, the very hem of his garment invited the suffering woman's touch of faith. When it was noised about that he was in a certain house straightway "all the city was gathered together at the door,"

bringing many that were sick with divers diseases. He came to heal the sick and to save the sinful — and his very presence was in itself an "effectual calling."

Here on the Jericho road he elicited the appeal of this blind beggar whose name was Bartimæus! "When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth he began to cry out, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Here was One who had opened his ministry with that broad proclamation of merciful intent upon his lips — "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and the recovering of sight to the blind." Some faint echo of that gracious ministry had penetrated the dark world where this sightless beggar lived his desolate life.

The Master was being received with much acclaim. He was moving with his disciples before the multitude in a kind of triumphal procession toward Jerusalem. The by-standers regarded it as preposterous that a blind beggar should in this unseemly manner obtrude his afflictions upon the notice of one who stood thus in the public eye. "Many charged him that he should hold his peace." Bartimæus was not the only blind man on the Jericho road — how blind were those bystanders as to the real object of the Master's concern.

The more they charged the beggar to hold his peace, the more he cried out. The effort to repress the sense of need, like the effort to compress steam, only serves to reveal its full strength. "He cried the more a great deal." Here was the rashness, the insistence, the sheer impudence of faith born of a desperate sense of need. The faith that will not take "No" for an answer is in line for a gracious "Yes." "Because of his importunity he will rise and give," not because God waits to have reluctance mas-

tered by importunity, but because the importunity reveals a quality of soul competent to receive a great answer to its appeal.

"Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying, Be of good comfort — he calleth thee." And in that instant there was begotten in the soul of that blind beggar a firm assurance of coming help. "He calleth thee." The Lord was taking the initiative. That fact in itself furnished an ample ground of reassurance. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." The ultimate responsibility is with him who is on High and not with us.

Then in further token of his eager, expectant faith, the blind beggar "casting away his garment rose and came to Jesus." These simple but significant actions on the part of the man who was both blind and poor all indicate what manner of man he was.

It was for that blind man the one chance of a lifetime and he could not let it pass. He had heard of this Jesus of Nazareth as one who ministered to human need with such effectiveness that men went away saying, "We never saw it on this fashion." He may have heard a rumor that when credentials of Messiahship were called for, Jesus answered, "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have good tidings preached to them." In the face of the possibilities which were there within reach of his pathetic appeal, the blind man showed all the energy and desperation of genuine faith.

How much depends upon the recognition and the utilization of an opportunity! Two young men are sent to college — they are both exposed to an education. One of them gets it, while the other through his own neglect remains immune. As George Ade has it, "You can lead a

boy to college, but you can't make him think." Two men go up to the Temple to pray. One of them by using his opportunity goes away with his heart full of blessings while the other man's heart is as empty as it came. There may have been forty other blind men that day in Jericho; they also may have heard that "Jesus of Nazareth was passing by," but they were left in darkness. They did not know the day of their visitation nor the line of effort which belonged to their peace.

The street is a noisy place, especially with "a great multitude" thronging it. But above the distraction Jesus heard the heartfelt appeal of human need. He stopped and commanded that the man who made the appeal should be brought to him. And when the blind beggar stood before him he said, "What wilt thou that I should do?" The blind man was ready with his reply. His faith and persistence were attended by an equal measure of directness. "Lord, that I might receive my sight."

"Jesus said to him, Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus in the way. He asked and he received. He sought and he found. He knocked and the door was opened unto him. He was blind — now he saw.

We may take the incident as a symbol of the whole healing, redemptive ministry of Christ. He came to take the faculties which lie clouded and inert and make them fulfill the high function for which they were designed. He came to open men's eyes, causing them to see. He opened the eyes in this man's head so that the Jordan Valley and the hills of Moab, the waving green of the pleasant fields and the soft azure of the sky above, the forms of his fellow-beings and the benign face of the One who had wrought the change in him, all swept into view.

He opens the eyes of men's minds. When the mind is

closed against the eternal spiritual verities, when the faculties of perception hold no vision of God and duty, of the efficacy of prayer and the potency of redemption, the quickening touch of the Master's Spirit widens the outlook of that beclouded mind. A whole universe of truth sweeps into view where before there was vacancy.

He opens the eyes of the heart through awakened and widened sympathies. How much of good there is in all these plain, unpretentious lives about us when once we have eyes to see and ears to hear and souls to understand! The social sympathies behold wondrous things in the passing crowd. The eye of friendliness ranges freely over wide areas of interest and attraction where the cold heart of indifference beholds nothing but a fresh occasion for being bored.

He opens the eyes of the soul. The pure in heart see God, not because they enjoy the vantage ground of a better location in the spiritual universe — they see God because they have something to see him with. The heart made pure becomes the organ of a beatific vision. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

He comes to Jericho and to Jersey City and to all the towns of earth that men may have life all the way up and all the way in and all the way through. He comes that every faculty lying inert and in danger of atrophy may be quickened into effective action. He comes that all may enter upon that fulness of life which is life indeed.

When this blind man received sight he "immediately followed Jesus in the way." He would make the first employ given to that restored power of sight the high task of declaring his allegiance by following "in his steps." It may be as one legend has it that Bartimæus became a noted, devoted disciple of the Lord, and for this reason

the narrative of his restoration is thus fully recorded in all the synoptic Gospels.

How far will a similarly bold and persistent faith go today in the healing of our physical and spiritual hurts? No one knows until he has put it to the test. The Lord's arm of mercy is not shortened that it cannot heal with the swiftest efficacy. It has seemed to many that we are now scratching the surface of great depths of helpfulness which await the approach of vital faith as we learn anew how to utilize directly mental and spiritual forces in the gaining and maintenance of that fulness of life which is the object of a universal quest.

XXXV

THE LIFE OF SERVICE

Luke 8 : 1-3; 9 : 57-62; 10 : 38-42

We have here three snapshots taken of the Master's movements. They all throw light upon the mode of life to which his followers are called. "He went about ['city by city, village by village,' the Greek has it, as indicating a systematic tour of evangelization] preaching good tidings of the Kingdom of God."

The prominence of devoted women in the Christian movement is remarked. "And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities ministered unto them of their substance." Three women are named, Mary Magdalen, Joanna and Susanna, and there were "many others." We must not confound this Mary with the "Magdalen" as that term is now used — Mary was a common name then as now and the distinctive reference is geographical. "Such an affliction as virulent demoniacal possession ['from whom seven devils had gone out'] would be incompatible with the miserable trade of prostitution. The woman who was 'a sinner,' Mary of Magdala and Mary of Bethany are three distinct persons."

During this tour of evangelization three aspirants for discipleship came. The incidents may not have occurred in immediate succession — the grouping may have been made because of the similarity of the incidents. The first man said in a brisk, confident way. "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." This sounded well — as well as Peter's confident word, "Though I should die

with thee yet will I not deny thee," which fell to the ground before cockcrow as an idle boast. Jesus made it plain that we cannot rely upon the enthusiasm of the moment as upon that carefully considered consecration which counts the cost in advance.

He indicated to this ready enthusiast that the life of service would be arduous. He would not deceive men at the start by any illusions —he would have them know exactly what they were in for. "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests [literally 'roosts,' for the birds have nests for only a brief period in each year], but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head."

The Master of men lived in a rough world while he was with us — he was a pilgrim and a sojourner. He was born in the manger of a stable. He was reared amid the rude surroundings of a carpenter's home in Nazareth. During his public ministry he was apparently without settled residence. He accepted hospitality when it was offered, sometimes by the rich, like Zaccheus, sometimes by the fairly well-to-do, like Mary and Martha, sometimes by those as poor as himself. When nothing better offered he slept in the open and ate the raw wheat which his disciples plucked in the fields. And when he came to die he did not die in a bed — he died on a cross and his body was laid in a borrowed tomb. His august life seemed to lack any suitable habitation.

He would have this eager enthusiast understand all this — the summons of Christ was a summons to sacrifice. In Matthew's Gospel we are told further that the man was "a scribe," one accustomed to the comforts of settled residence and regular employ. The call to the wandering, precarious, self-denying life which Jesus here indicated in brief but telling phrase apparently deterred him and he turned back to follow no more with them.

The second aspirant was ready to " follow," but he asked for leave of absence that he might first go and bury his father. The request seems reasonable, and the apparent harshness of Jesus' refusal has been a stumblingblock to many. The Chinese, with their strong blend of filial reverence and of scrupulous regard for the performance of suitable rites for the dead, regard this as a highly immoral passage. It is a " hard saying " and it has to be translated several times before the newly awakened Chinese convert can receive it.

We are to remember that it was the custom of Jesus to announce principles of action in bold paradoxes, that they might attract attention and be remembered. These are to be interpreted according to the spirit of them rather than pressed on all fours in literal fashion. " Let the dead bury their dead " — let those who have never felt the call to a more vital form of service attend to those services of ceremony which regard for custom prescribes. The Master would say that attention to those amenities of private life here indicated must yield supremacy and become subordinate to the demands of spiritual service.

We are to remember also the elaborate and long-drawn-out ceremonies implied in " burying one's father," according to Oriental usage. When the father of one of Li Hung Chang's ministers died this public servant asked leave of absence for four months that he might attend the funeral of his father. He knew that some such period of time would be required for the complete fulfilment of the demands of Oriental etiquette in the matter of funeral observance. Bearing in mind the method of Jesus in stating principles in bold paradoxes and the extended funeral customs of the East, the harshness of his saying is relieved.

There came a third man, saying, " I will follow thee, Lord, but suffer me first to bid farewell to them that are

at my house." His word indicates that his heart was in the past rather than in that future of fellowship in service to which his first impulse had summoned him. It is not permissible to leave Christ in order to attend farewell dinners with our friends. The mood of the man, more than his words, seems to be judged. No lukewarm need apply. "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God."

"His hand to the plow! The Master did not use the figure heedlessly," as Dr. Jowett said: "Plowing is the heaviest work in the toil of the field. Sowing the seed is a comparatively easy ministry. Reaping is associated with warmth and triumph. But plowing is heavy, laborious work. It is concerned with the disturbance of the commonplace, the breaking up of the hard, familiar surface, the exposing of the hidden depths to the light and air, to the dews and rains of the upper world. So it is in the Kingdom of God." The men who are to follow him are "to be men of masculine handgrip, of magnificent tenacity of purpose, who once they had begun upon a field would see the furrow through."

We come, then, to the third passage. It records the varied attention which Mary and Martha gave the Master when he was entertained at their home. It may be that this bit is inserted immediately after the parable of the Good Samaritan as a further answer to the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Mere action, kindly though it be, unaccompanied by the sense of fellowship with God, leaves the life incomplete. "The enthusiasm of humanity if divorced from the love of God is likely to degenerate into mere serving of tables." The habit of being troubled with many things may become mere motion, rather than effective action in the Master's cause.

"Martha received him into her house, and she had a

sister called Mary who also sat at the Jesus' feet and heard his word." The "also" seems superfluous and confusing, but the sentence might be paraphrased — "Martha gave him a welcome and Mary also expressed her devotion in her own way."

It was not a way which commended itself to the older and more practical sister. "Martha was cumbered with much serving," as zealous, over-scrupulous housekeepers are wont to be. "She came up to him" — the Greek indicates an impatient movement with a dash of temper in it, and her words of remonstrance are not in the best breeding. Her rebuke is addressed not to her sister, but to her guest, — "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?"

"Martha, Martha" — the very repetition of her name indicates an affectionate, kindly remonstrance. The good woman, allowing the spirit of a generous hospitality to become a burden rather than a joyous privilege, was anxious, distracted, harassed beyond what was needful. She was too much concerned "about many things."

How applicable is this word to the burdensome hospitality in our social life! "The complexity of modern life wears out the nerves. What a simple thing eating is! It does not require much food to sustain a body for twenty-four hours. A few simple dishes, served in a simple way, are all that is necessary for health and strength. But we love to elaborate. We have developed the act of eating into a fine art. We have elaborated the dinner table until it has become a burden. We have multiplied the knives and forks, the spoons and goblets. We have added to the courses, and each course must have its frills and accompaniments until the dinner table threatens to become a menace to the health of the nation."

The sons and the daughters of Martha are everywhere.

They can scarcely sleep at night in their super-anxiety over such questions as "What shall we eat?" and "What shall we drink?" and "What shall we put on?" and "How will it look when we get it on?" It is high time that the still small voice of spiritual authority should recall them from that mental overstrain busied with "many things" which are not "needful" to that "good part" which is vital.

May it not be that the Church of Christ also needs this word? It too becomes troubled, distracted, harassed by its many societies, its countless forms of activity, its multitude of meetings which no unrenewed mind can number. It finds itself out of breath, depleted in spirit, confused rather than inspired by its many-wheeled machinery. In some instances it has lost the high art of setting the soul in conscious fellowship with the Master to choose and to achieve that good part which cannot be taken away.

XXXVI

THE RANK AND FILE

Luke 10 : 1-24

The Lord sent out two main groups of disciples, the first one numbering twelve, the other seventy. The names of the twelve are known everywhere. The greatest church in the world is St. Peter's at Rome; the court of the British empire is called the court of St. James; and a multitude of infants that no man can number are named for St. John. But no one can give the name of a single one of the other seventy.

These last are the quiet, nameless, untitled and almost unknown people whom Christ sends forth. They are not conspicuous enough to get into history or even into the newspapers. They never sit on twelve thrones of Christian usefulness judging the tribes of Israel. Their names will not be found written on the foundation stones of the city of God. Their only recognition is that of the Father who seeth in secret, yet the rating of the Master ranked them above many of the "wise and understanding" in the significance their service held for the advance of his Kingdom.

They outnumbered the more conspicuous disciples five to one. The number given may have been taken from the seventy elders of Moses or from the number in the Sanhedrim. It is more probable, however, that in this Gentile Gospel of Luke they stood for the number of outside Gentile nations, of whom the Jews said there were just "seventy." The mere list of so many names in this brief

record of the Master's work would have required too much space, so the names are omitted. They symbolize "that great multitude which no man can number of all nations and peoples, kindreds and tongues," who by their simple fidelity in causing righteousness to bear rule upon the earth are to "stand before the throne clothed with white robes and with palms in their hands."

They were all laymen apparently — "babes" in theological understanding, Jesus called them — yet by the genuineness of their devotion they, rather than "the wise and prudent," were allowed to share intimately in the counsel and holy activity of their Lord. Unordained, unofficial, untitled Christians they were, sent forth to make the world better by living the life they had learned from him. There are no words of depreciation to be spoken touching the valued service of great leaders, but the hope of the world rests at last upon those plain people who make up the rank and file in the army of the Lord.

The work of those honored few who write books, endow colleges, organize reforms, is spread before us in the newspapers with headlines and pictures. Their work has value and may justly receive high appraisal. But not all are apostles; not all are prophets; not all are workers of miracles; not all speak with tongues. There are many who walk in what Paul called "an excellent way," whose service is altogether of a simpler type.

They cannot speak with the tongues of men and of angels; they cannot understand all mysteries and all knowledge; they cannot exercise faith which would move mountains. But they can love. They can suffer long and be kind. They can act the part of unselfishness and not get puffed up. They can bear and believe, hope and endure all sorts of things for the sake of the cause they have at heart. And in this quiet, steadfast devotion to the

highest they see they are steadily moving along a line of personal development and of social achievement which "never faileth."

The other seventy went forth "two and two" for companionship, for mutual counsel and for the supplementing, each by each, of possible deficiencies. The whole Christian undertaking is social rather than solitary — the man who takes pride in flocking by himself has broken with its essential spirit and method.

They went "as lambs among wolves." There was no show of sharp teeth, no claws, no deadly guns. They were simple, primitive Christians who had never been misled by the false note in "The White Man's Burden" nor beguiled by the trick of backing up the offer of a higher life with gunpowder. They went as Paul went into Macedonia, a troubled region then and now, as Livingstone went into the heart of blackest Africa, as John G. Paton went among the cannibals of the South Sea Islands. They went as the real emissaries of the Cross go in every age, taking their lives in their hands, relying upon instruction and persuasion, kindness and moral appeal for the victories they were sent to win.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal — they never have been and in the very nature of the case they never can be. The power of moral enthusiasm and spiritual passion is destroyed the moment we take the sword to further the interests of Him who said, as he was being led away to be crucified, restraining his leading disciple from further violence, "Put up thy sword." Lambs among wolves, gentleness and self-sacrifice pitted against cruelty and sharp teeth — it seemed a contest unequal, but it was along this line that Christ achieved his successes.

They were to be men of definite purpose, allowing nothing to delay or distract them upon their high errand.

"Salute no man by the way," Jesus said. His words sound curt. They have puzzled many a gracious soul. But when one sees the well-nigh endless "salaaming and kotowing" which make up the full-orbed idea of an Oriental "salute" he appreciates the meaning of this direction. The ambassador charged with affairs of state does not allow himself to be needlessly hindered by useless social customs, eating up time and strength to no purpose. The other seventy were to comport themselves as men conscious of their important mission.

They were sent as forerunners of the Christ "into every city and place whither he himself would come." They could not speak as did the One who spake as never man spake nor live as did the One in whom neither Pilate nor all the ages since have found any fault at all. But they could tell something of the glad tidings Jesus brought; they could show some measure of the spirit they had come to share with him. It is an exacting responsibility thus to become a representative of the Christ to those hearts into which he is purposing to come. It is a solemn thought that to some one soul every Christian will be the best sample of Christian life that soul will ever know in any intimate way. In the propagation of the Christian life the method of personal contagion was the uniform method of the Master — "As the Father hath sent me, I send you."

This laymen's mission appears to have been immensely successful. The seventy came back and reported, "Lord, the devils are subject unto us through thy name." They had won notable victories over the forces of evil. The sick had been healed, the sufferers who were sometimes regarded as demoniacs were restored to sanity and usefulness, the sinful held by the tight grip of evil habit as in a vise had been released, to become free and brave in the cause of

righteousness. All this achieved by those plain people who found the forces of evil subject to them when they made their effective approach in the name of Christ!

Jesus rejoiced — literally "exulted," and it is the only instance where we are told that he actually "exulted" — in the success of the movement. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes." He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, yet he exulted over the moral triumphs of these plain people.

He spoke in the most sanguine terms, what is to be regarded as a prophetic word rather than a cold statement of accomplished fact, of the ultimate success which would crown this movement. "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." The ultimate overthrow of the kingdom of evil through the power exerted by these plain people saturated with his spirit stood before his wise eye as a sure outcome. "Kings and priests," he said to the privileged twelve, "have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them."

Then he cautioned the successful seventy against the unwisdom of exalting the triumph of an hour above the sober significance of the fact that they were definitely committed to a certain mode of life. "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you — rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven." The sudden rally which drives back the enemy's line at a single point, the swift winning of some hard-fought skirmish, the well-won victory in some one hard-fought battle, does not for a moment rank in real significance with the permanent enrollment of men and women as citizens of that kingdom which is an everlasting kingdom.

Men may win a victory today and another tomorrow

and then suffer defeat the third day. Yet all the while, because their wills have been brought into harmony with the will of God, they may move ahead in the serene enjoyment of a celestial recognition — they may know that their names are written in heaven. Let them rejoice mainly in this! It is not the particular deed of yesterday or of the day before in the uncertainty of its immediate effect which is of most significance — it is the fundamental purpose of the life.

We cannot all be major-generals or be numbered with the twelve apostles, with churches in Rome named after us and our names inscribed on the walls of the New Jerusalem. But every life may catch the spirit of Christ, enroll itself under the banner of Christ and by the useful service rendered cause the heart of Christ to exult when he sees that life coming up to give an account of the warfare waged against the powers of evil.

XXXVII

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Luke 11 : 14-26; 33-36

The Master had just healed a mute. The malady was a mysterious one and the credulous, unscientific diagnosis of that day attributed his inability to speak to "a dumb spirit." Matthew says that the man was also "blind," which complicated the trouble. There seemed to be no line of approach to his inner consciousness, and the healing of these unfortunate beings seemed to the enemies of Christ uncanny. They attributed his success to the devil — "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils."

They were almost forced to such a conclusion by the logic of their position. "A rigid monotheistic religion like the Jewish left but one escape from the authority of miracles once acknowledged to be such and not mere collusions or sleights of hand. There remained nothing to say but that which the adversaries of our Lord were continually saying, that these works were the works of the Evil One."

Jesus does not so much censure the blasphemy of their contention as expose the intellectual absurdity of it. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. If Satan be divided against himself how shall his kingdom stand?" Division means destruction. We learned here in America by bitter experience that a nation could not continue "half-slave and half-free." The recognition of the rightfulness of slavery must obtain everywhere or the principle of human freedom must become universal.

The strong man fully armed guardeth his own and his goods are in peace. It is only when a stronger appears upon the scene and overcomes him, taking away his armor, that those goods can be divided up as spoils. It was manifest that "The Stronger" was there upon the scene overcoming the power of evil — opening blind eyes, unstopping deaf ears, loosening the tongues that were tied in silence, taking possession of life after life in the name of a fuller and happier mode of existence. The facts could not be gainsaid — therefore they were to judge whether or no Satan, the reputed head of the whole kingdom of physical and moral evil, had taken up arms against himself.

Jesus claimed to do these mighty works "by the finger of God." It may be that the interpretation of this phrase as indicating "the ease" with which it was done (no need being felt for the whole "mighty hand and outstretched arm" to accomplish the end) is fanciful. Jesus was indicating in this telling phrase the divine agency in the matter. It may be that he was carrying their minds back to the scene on the Nile where Moses confounded the magic-venders of Pharaoh by works which caused them to say, "This is the finger of God." There was the same opposition between the power of Jesus and the power of Beelzebub as between the powers intrusted to Moses and the clever tricks of the magicians.

Then follows what has been skillfully termed "The Parable of the Vacuum." "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man he walketh through dry places seeking rest" — seeking a soul to rest in — "and finding none he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh seven other spirits more wicked than himself and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

The untenanted heart is in peril. The empty life is at the mercy of all the evil spirits which are abroad. The man out of whom some evil has been cast — reliance upon the false stimulus of alcohol, the gambling mania, the lustful practice, the addiction to morphia — where its place is not at once occupied by some more absorbing and worthy interest, finds himself restless, dissatisfied, lonesome. He misses the companionship of his familiar sin. And unless he is occupied and preoccupied by the expulsive and defensive power of some new devotion, he may speedily find himself given over to seven other forms of evil, his last state becoming worse than the first.

The man who has simply "cut it out," repenting of his evil-doing without turning to Christ, still suffers from what the insurance men call "a moral hazard." The unoccupied house is not ordinarily an insurable house. Emptiness means peril in things temporal and in things spiritual.

"Sin no more — Enter into peace," indicates the double movement of the soul on its effective way from darkness to light. The empty life, even though it be swept and garnished, is not the saved nor the safe life — the full life is the life safeguarded against relapse. "I am come that they might have life" — clean, sweet, wholesome indeed, but also full and strong — "and that they might have it more abundantly."

There are lives possessed of resource abundant, perpetually moving about in a nervous quest of pleasurable excitement which only leaves the vacuum of weariness, tedium, *ennui*. In sheer discontent with the emptiness of it all they fling themselves away in some wild folly or spree in order to escape from the sense of vacancy within. The seven spirits come and the last state is worse than the first. Such souls need the unifying and occupying power of

a great life purpose sufficient to hold the situation against all comers.

Here is the old collect as it stands in the revised version: "O God who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom, grant unto thy servants that strength which the world cannot yield, that our hearts being replenished by thee we may spend our years in joyous usefulness through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord."

The parable may have had a direct application to those Jews. "The old demon of idolatry brought down on the Jews the Babylonian captivity and was in turn cast out by it. They did not after their return fall into idolatry again, but rather endured persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes. The emptying, sweeping and garnishing may be traced in the growth of the Pharisaic and Rabbinical schools between the return from Babylon and the coming of our Lord. The re-possession and accession of seven other wicked spirits may be seen in their bitter hostility to Christ and in all their current evil-doing."

The saving of many an individual life and of many a community turns upon the question of providing adequate interests and resources, employments and companionships to replace the banished evil. The intelligent physician does not undertake to "kill microbes" — that renowned and futile task is left to the quack and the patent medicine man whose title to recognition is found only on the bill-boards — he strengthens the organism that it may itself guard the citadel of life, "keeping its goods in peace." And this becomes the recognized method of treatment in moral maladies. Be filled with the Spirit that ye may not be drunken with wine! "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

"Here comes in the absolute necessity of providing

rational and cheap amusements for the people whom our philanthropists are trying to draw off from the saloon and the gambling house. Pictures, parks, museums, libraries, music, a healthier and happier religion, a brighter and sunnier tone to all our life — these are the positive powers which must come in with every form of prohibition and restraint before our poorer people can be brought to live a sensible and sober life."

"Look at the lives that our rich people live," said Phillips Brooks to his congregation, made up mainly of the children of good fortune. "It is not any form of prohibition, legal or social, that keeps them from degrading and disgusting vice. It is the fulness of their own lives, the warmth, glow, comfort and abundance of their homes, the occupation of their minds, the positive and not the negative, the interest and plenty which the poor man never knows. Before you or I dare blame him we must in imagination empty our lives like his and ask what sort of people we should be in the squalor of his garret, and the hopelessness of a lot like his."

We find the same principle operating in the matter of changing beliefs. The men who have jauntily thrown away the convictions which formerly possessed their souls, without emerging into some more rational and tenable faith, are proverbially the ones most liable to be overtaken by the worst sort of sophistry and conceit showily offering itself to the emptied mind as a philosophy of life.

The lighted lamp is not put in a cellar nor under a bushel basket, but on the lamp stand that it may light the house, enabling all those who enter in to see. In like manner the light of the inner life is the eye. And that there may be light within enabling each man to recognize all things in their true proportions and right perspective, the eye must be simple, single, straightforward in its work

of seeing. Where the eye is evil the inner life gropes and fumbles in thick darkness.

The Master then quickly passes from this bold figure to the application of the principle to the moral life. Take heed that the moral light by which you order your life be not darkness. Take heed that those more enduring realities are seen in their true proportions and in right perspective. The only competent "organ of spiritual knowledge," as Robertson pointed out long ago, is "moral obedience." If any man wills to do God's will he comes to know the truth as it is. If any man will take upon him the yoke of Christ, linking up his life with the life of the Master in patient, co-operative service, he will learn of him.

Here are the two contending principles — the darkness in which the adversaries of Christ walked as they sought to credit his good deeds to the agency of Satan; and the light in which those men walk whose eyes and hearts are single, simple and sincere. Let the spirit of obedience illumine the life within that "the whole may be full of light as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."

XXXVIII

THE SHAM AND THE REAL

Luke 11 : 37-54

The word "Pharisee" means "separate." The main purpose of this church party was separation from everything non-Jewish. The law must be scrupulously kept. There should be no introduction of foreign ideas or practices. The least bit of alliance with the uncircumcised outsider was taboo. In their devotion to what they believed to be Hebraic they were purists of the first water.

Their strenuous devotion, which was of the letter rather than of the spirit, had made their piety legalistic rather than evangelical. The essence of religion lay in rule-keeping rather than in a certain inward temper and disposition. And with misdirected zeal they had imposed upon the written law a heavy load of oral tradition which made it a burden grievous to be borne.

The Pharisees were the first to assume an attitude of open hostility to our Lord. The reason is plain. His indifference to their ascetic practices — "He came eating and drinking;" his disregard for Levitical purity — he urged and practiced a righteousness which was of the heart; his broad, humane use of the Sabbath as "made for man" rather than as an item in a certain glove-fitting religious *regime*, all tended to alienate him from the Pharisees.

Jesus was a faithful, conscientious member of the Jewish Church. He had a right to expect that his fellow-members would aid him in his mission which included the spiritualizing of that ancient cultus of faith and practice. But when

he came to his own, his own received him not. The leading church party of that day arrayed itself in hateful opposition to his gracious purpose.

In turn Jesus denounced the Pharisees with a severity which seems almost out of drawing with his customary attitudes. His sternest rebukes were not directed against the coarse sins of gluttonous men and winebibbers or against publicans and harlots. The rebukes, which were sharper than any two-edged sword, were directed against those high churchmen who were intent upon the corpse of religion rather than upon the living soul of it. He called them "whited sepulchres," "the offspring of serpents and vipers," "blind leaders of the blind," "an evil and adulterous generation." He saw conscientious men among them, but the system they represented was fatal to the interests of morality and religion.

Here in this passage, "A Pharisee asked Jesus to dine with him; and he went in and sat down to meat." The Master had come straight from his contact with the multitude where he had been casting out a demon. The Pharisee marveled that he should sit down to meat without having observed the ceremonial cleansing. The blue-blooded ecclesiastic, more careful of ritual than of moral values, more intent upon religious technique than upon the weightier matters of justice and mercy, felt outraged. He was sadly deficient in vital faith and in humane feeling, but he had a long, sharp nose for the slightest departure from burdensome tradition.

His objection to the unwashed hands of the Master was not hygienic nor æsthetic — it was based altogether on ceremonial grounds. When a high and dry Pharisee came in from any sort of contact with his fellowmen he scrupulously washed off the possible defilement which might perchance have fastened upon him. It might be that some un-

circumcised Gentile had touched elbows with him in the crowd or had allowed the wanton air to blow directly from his objectionable person upon the sacred Pharisee.

The Master censured the Pharisees for this threefold error.

1. They were giving their main attention to the outward forms of religion rather than to those inward qualities of mind and heart which are the chief concern of faith and conscience. "Ye Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and platter, but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness. Ye foolish ones!" Did not He that made the outside make the inside also? It is easy to see where the author of a recent, widely read story found the title for his book and the Scriptural warrant for its main contention.

2. The Master censured them because they were giving attention to the petty observances of religious usage rather than to the weightier matters of faith and practice. They were tithing "mint, rue and every herb," but were giving small heed to justice and the love of God. They were painstaking in their fidelity to the salt, the pepper and the mustard on the table of the Lord, but they forgot to eat or to serve that bread which comes down from above to give life unto the world.

3. The Master censured them because they were strong in condemnation, but weak in sympathy. They could pile up huge loads of oral tradition. They could burden the consciences of their fellows with fictitious scruples as heavy as lead. But they did not themselves touch the moral burdens of the race with the tips of their fingers. They sat apart in the seat of the scornful, proud, self-righteous, contemptuous.

The common people heard the Master gladly, but the Pharisees did not. They called him "Beelzebub" and

stopped their ears. His teaching was too direct, too vital, too disturbing for them. He had the same effect upon them that one would have if he left the outside door open. There was a draught and too much fresh air for the Pharisees. They had never heard it before on that fashion and they did not want to hear it any more on that fashion.

What an ugly caricature of the fair face of religion looks out upon the world from the front of a system where artificial distinctions and ecclesiastical etiquette are exalted above righteousness of life and kindliness of heart! Generations of this misdirected emphasis had produced a race of men of whom Jesus said with searching and terrible accuracy, "This people honoreth me with their *lips*, but their *heart* is far from me."

In its inception the Hebrew system of religious purifications had value for the moral education of an undeveloped people. The use of such symbols aided in establishing in their minds a clearer conception of holiness when an abstract ethical idea would have made no effective appeal. But with the writings of the great prophets in their hands and with the words of the Master falling upon their ears, the educative value attaching to that kindergarten stage of a nation's spiritual development had been superseded. The painstaking insistence upon an elaborately wrought out system of minute observances had become unspeakably trivial.

"Give for alms those things which are within and behold all things are clean unto you." The practice of a kindly benevolence was a much surer way of keeping their meals and their lives free from ceremonial defilement than all the washing of cups and pots.

Jesus then uttered a triad of "Woes" against these lovers of sham and pretense.

Woe unto you Pharisees that tithe trifles and pass over the weighty considerations of moral life!

Woe unto you Pharisees that love the front seats of honor in the synagogue and gracious salutations in the marketplace to which your real character does not entitle you!

Woe unto you Pharisees who are like whitewashed graves over which men walk unwittingly to their defilement — your insincerity is such that men receive moral damage from contact with you all unawares!

It was a terrible arraignment, but there was cause. When the cheap things of life are counterfeited wrong is done, but the result is not serious. When the gold coin of the realm, the circulating medium of human society, the ultimate standard to which all material values are referred for final appraisal, is counterfeited, then the result is calamitous. In similar fashion when religion, the coin of the realm in the world of moral values, is made a sham, then the stream of life is corrupted at the source.

The formalism of those Pharisees at times became inordinately cruel. They relieved themselves from those immediate duties vital to the maintenance of human institutions by a kind of ethical hocus-pocus. If the word "Corban" had been pronounced over any possession which might properly have been used for the support of one's needy parents, the selfish son could retain that piece of property without incurring the sense of having broken the command of God touching the duty of children to their parents. He could by this piece of sleight-of-hand take refuge in a religious bankruptcy act provided by "the tradition of the elders," relieving himself from the moral obligations which rested upon him.

The Master charged up to that perverted system of the Pharisees an appalling amount of evil. "From the blood

of Abel to the blood of Zachariah who perished between the altar and the sanctuary it shall be required of this generation." The murder of Abel was the first and the murder of Zachariah was the last in the Jewish canon which ended with second Chronicles. And the entire system had been so misleading that Jesus laid at its door the cruel neglect of those divine injunctions designed to make life with all its interests safe.

The Master was real and he sternly insisted upon reality in his followers. He had no patience with shams for he lived in the open where there was neither pretense nor deceit. To this end was he born, and for this cause did he come into the world that he might bear witness to the truth. When he reckons up his followers therefore he is satisfied with nothing less than truth in the inward parts.

XXXIX

FAITH DESTROYING FEAR

Luke 12: 1-12

"Fear not, only believe." "Fear not — it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." "Fear not, ye are of more value than many sparrows." The Master would lift his disciples above those hindering apprehensions of disaster into the same serene trust which possessed his own radiant life.

The immediate occasion of the utterances in this lesson was the attitude of the Pharisees referred to in the preceding chapter. Jesus had denounced their sham religion, jabbing his rebukes into their tough hides as if each word had been an ox-goad. "And when he was come out, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press upon him vehemently and to provoke him to speak of many things, laying wait for him to catch something out of his mouth." And because the questions touched upon were live, the popular interest ran high — "there was gathered together an innumerable multitude insomuch that the people trod upon one another."

"He said to his disciples first of all, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy." The term "leaven" is used almost uniformly in Scripture as a symbol of evil — the one well-known exception being the other use of it in the group of parables touching "the Kingdom of Heaven." The subtle, pervasive power of evil is here suggested. If "the Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven," the kingdom of hell is also like leaven in its pervasive and corrupting

energy. If the principle of evil be introduced into three measures of life, it may pervade and corrupt the whole lump.

The particular form of evil-leaven which worked in the Pharisaical lump of life was the spirit of insincerity. They were the most religious men on earth outwardly — religion was their supreme concern — but within they were possessed by malice and wickedness. They were " hypocrites " and Jesus warned his disciples against their deadly sin of insincerity.

The quality of sincerity for a teacher of religion is the cardinal excellence — it is what virtue is to a woman, courage to a soldier, honesty to a banker. It is the *sine qua non* — if it is wanting, everything is wanting. If the people cannot feel sure that the man means what he says, that he is striving to order his own life by the principles he urges upon them, that his appraisal of relative values as he makes his own determinations is the same as that declared in public speech, then his utterances are vain and his influence also is vain. " The subtle, commanding accent of spiritual veracity," which can come only from " truth in the inward parts " is the prime requisite for all such service. " Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy."

Jesus indicated not only the wickedness of it, but the foolishness of it. The truth is sure to come out at last. We live in a world of fact rather than of fancy, and there is a steady insistence that the facts shall be known. "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known." This may or may not be attended by the sudden bursting open of all closet doors where skeletons are hid, or by the emptying out of all baskets of dirty linen. This is secondary. In the inevitable registry upon character (which steadily goes on for good or

ill) in the life of the man who is a hypocrite and in the lives of those whom he influences to their hurt, there is written a fearful record which one day shall be declared.

The Master therefore urges upon his disciples the practice of a courageous sincerity. They are to live so that it will occasion them no dismay that what they have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light, what they have whispered in the ear, shall be proclaimed from the housetops. Where the life is genuine it has no fear of daylight or of X-rays.

He knew what temptations they would have to face. He knew that the servant would not be above his Lord — if they called the Master "Beelzebub" and led him to the Cross, the disciples could not count upon immunity. He may already have seen tokens in his leading disciple which would cause him to hide behind the door in a thrice-repeated cowardly denial. He therefore addresses his disciples with an especial tenderness — "I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid."

These men were urged not to be afraid of those who might kill the body and after that have nothing more that they could do. "Fear Him who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell." The "fear Him" refers not to Satan, but to God. The disciples were told to resist Satan fearlessly, but not to fear him. There is no teaching which indicates that Satan has power to cast into hell. The Master is seeking to lift their dread away from these earthly enemies and tribunals which have only a limited ability to injure up to that Supreme Tribunal whose authority is absolute.

In added warning he points out the awful and lasting consequences of denying their profession either by insincerity or by cowardly fear. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man confess before the

angels of God. But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." The "confessing" of Christ involves something more vital than the mere verbal profession of one's acceptance of him. It means the open, steady and persistent acknowledgment of our relation to him in word, thought and deed as the Lord of our lives. And such a genuine confession of allegiance will be attended by his open, steady and persistent acknowledgment of his relation to us as Saviour.

Knowing the constant tendency of character toward that rigidity which makes the work of spiritual repair all but impossible, Jesus here indicated the peril of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. Speaking against the Son of Man would be forgiven, but speaking against the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven. The reference is not to some special form of words uttered; the "unpardonable sin" is not one specific act. It consists rather of "speaking against" the inner voice of the Spirit, by paying no heed to his admonitions, until the heart is firm set in the path of disobedience.

If any man feels troubled lest he may have committed the unpardonable sin, let him be assured that he has not committed it. His own concern and spiritual unrest are hopeful. The sin which hath not forgiveness means that inward hardening of the spiritual nature which issues in total apathy and indifference. The conscience is atrophied and the Spirit is grieved away by this persistent refusal of all the overtures of a merciful redemption until the very desire for forgiveness is gone. The moral apathy is such as to make repentance and renewal not theoretically impossible, but practically improbable and unlikely — this is the sin which is "a sin unto death."

In the face of these perils the Master heartened his disciples by certain confident assurances. "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, yet not one of them is

forgotten before God. Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Even the hairs of your head are all numbered."

This promise of a personal, minute attention to the needs of these myriads of human lives staggers our belief. The mind of man is not built on a scale to readily apprehend the full content of such an affirmation. But the Heavenly Father is an Infinite Father! The scale and range of his boundless interest are such as to demand literally an endless array of objects upon which to expend his love. There is with him no saturation-point of interest to be speedily passed by the increasing number of small concerns.

The clear word of William James on this point sounds the note of an intelligent confidence. "God has so inexhaustible a capacity for love that his call and need is for a literally endless accumulation of created lives. He can never faint nor grow weary as we should under the increasing supply. His scale is infinite in all things. His sympathy can never know satiety or glut."

When we undertake to picture to ourselves the providential interest and care of the Father we sometimes forget that he is not such another as ourselves. "Revere thy Maker, lift thine eye up to his style and manners of the sky." In the light of that larger vision of the eternal verities, we may readily believe that he notes the sparrow's fall and that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered.

When these disciples were arraigned before synagogues and rulers because of their bold confession of Christ, they were not to be anxious as to how they would answer. The Holy Spirit would teach them in that hour what to say. The promise is made solely with reference to those times of trial when they were arraigned by the authorities for their faith.

The lazy minister is not to be encouraged by such a

promise to go unprepared into his pulpit trusting that if he but open his mouth "the Lord will fill it." The Lord will fill it with fresh air if the church is well ventilated, but he lays upon the heart of the man himself the more serious responsibility of further filling it with a helpful and inspiring message as a part of the service to which he is appointed. The Holy Spirit is an intelligent Spirit, able to show reasons for all he does — and the added enduement of power is bestowed upon those men who have shown diligence in using their own powers to the utmost in preparing for their high task.

XL

CHRIST'S TABLE TALK

Luke 14 : 7-24

Jesus uttered his message as he sat at meat and as he walked by the way. He wrote his ideals upon the door-posts of the house. He fastened his principles for a sign upon men's hands. He made his aspirations as frontlets between their eyes. He was always about his Father's business.

Here he was being entertained in the home of plenty. "One of the chief Pharisees had invited him to eat bread." The Master spoke first to the guests when he saw their unseemly scramble for the places of distinction. "When thou art bidden to a feast, sit not down in the highest place. Go and sit down in the lowest place, that he that bade thee may say, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then thou shalt have honor in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee." In the Kingdom of God the pathway of humility is the pathway to promotion. The man who exalts himself is by that very fact (not as a punishment, but by the quality of life produced) abased; while the man who humbleth himself is by his quality of life exalted.

I was once entertained in the city of Kyoto in the well-appointed home of a generous Japanese. A formal dinner was given for our pleasure, and when we entered the dining-room my wife and I were asked to sit in the places of honor. We at once took the places designated as we would have done in an American home at the bidding of the hostess. But we were told next day by a resident missionary

present at the dinner who knew us well enough to be frank, that we had committed an unpardonable breach of etiquette. We did not know the moves in the game as the well-bred play it in Japan. We should have gone to the lower end of the dining-room and have seated ourselves there. The host would then have urged us to take the other seats, and gradually we would have allowed ourselves to be persuaded, showing that proper measure of reluctance required by good breeding, until we were transferred to those higher seats at the dinner which were originally meant for us.

The Japanese present passed it over in charitable fashion, attributing it to our American deficiency in proper deportment which they believe to be quite common. And when we learned, to our humiliation, how such things are done in Japanese society, we felt that we did not need any commentaries on this passage in Luke to enable us to fully comprehend its meaning.

"Sit not down in the highest place." What a word for those anxious social aspirants who are feverishly eating their hearts out in their scramble for preferment at the feasts of the Four Hundred! They would consult their own interest as well as improve the quality of their action by giving sober heed to this principle uttered by One who was termed by Lord Chesterfield, "the only perfect gentleman in the history of the world." The "climbers" in society are habitually "abased" in the eyes of those whose social standing is secure, while those who bend to unselfish service from a kindly interest in their fellows are steadily exalted.

The Master then had a word of suggestion for his host, so that each man might receive his meat in due season. "When thou makest a dinner, call not thy friends nor thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors, lest haply they also bid

thee again and a recompense be made." "*Lest haply*" — what delicate and delicious irony! He speaks of the possible return of favors as if it were a peril they were incurring instead of being the solid result at which they were directly aiming in their studied cultivation of their "rich neighbors." The Master did not disdain to use irony at times to point his truth and make it sting. He pressed home his truth by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of effective speech.

"Call not" — the verb stands in the present tense as indicating a certain habit to be avoided. Men were not to be continually inviting their "rich neighbors" who would naturally recompense them with reciprocal hospitality. The rich were not to be omitted entirely from invitation, but they were not to monopolize one's hospitality to the exclusion of those unable to make such generous recompense for courtesies extended.

"When thou makest a feast" — when the heart's best energies find expression in some unusual way, "call the poor." Let the finest offices of generosity be directed mainly to those who need them most rather than to those who need them least.

The uncalculating disposition furnishes the only mood competent to exercise the grace of hospitality upon its higher levels. Where the eyes of the host are intent upon a possible return of favors, the entertainer of those "rich neighbors" may not be showing himself hospitable at all. He may be merely doing a little business with his well-to-do friends in terms of social value. "It is pleasant to entertain one's friends, seemly to entertain one's relatives, advantageous to entertain one's rich neighbors" — but hospitality cannot stop there without losing its soul. It must move on to the merging of all thought of reciprocal advantage in that gracious entertainment of the poor, the

maimed, the lame, the blind, who cannot recompense the kindness shown them — it will thus find itself.

The situation at the Pharisee's table was becoming somewhat strained by these unconventional remarks of this teacher of religion from up country — he was " a Galilean " in whom none of the rulers believed. " A painful silence, such as may befall a party or even a prayer meeting when something too real and searching has been said, had hushed the conversation at this dinner table."

Then there came to the relief of the host and of all hands one of those smiling individuals who always carry with them a generous supply of small change and of pious platitude, to fill up the awkward gaps in polite conversation. " Blessed is he," said this complacent gentleman intent upon the enjoyment of his dinner without having it marred by the intrusion of irritating and impossible social ideals — " Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God."

No exceptions can be taken to this statement as a general proposition. But the Master was not accustomed to do business in the shallow waters of meaningless platitude. He at once launched out into the deep and let down his net as a fisherman intent upon values fundamental.

He told them a most unlikely story of a man who made a great supper and invited many. The invitations apparently were accepted. When the time arrived he sent his servant to say, " Come, for all things are now ready." Then the guests began to offer the most absurd excuses — one had purchased a farm, another had bought a yoke of oxen and a third had married and was unwilling — for some inexplicable reason — to bring his bride to the " great supper."

This is not the way of the world. This is not the way people generally deport themselves in the presence of

invitations to "great suppers," especially where the invitations have been previously accepted. It was by this improbable picture of human action that Jesus exposed in telling fashion the shameful inconsistency and absurdity of those Jews who having reckoned themselves for centuries the chosen guests of God were now refusing his own summons to that best wine of the feast through their sinful preoccupation with "many things."

The Master answered that easygoing platitude about the blessedness of eating bread in the Kingdom of God, by asking those men at table with him how much they really cared for those high ideals of the Kingdom declared in their ears by his own message. What sacrifices were they ready to make in the matter of farms or oxen or home comforts for the sake of realizing those great ideals that men might eat bread in the Kingdom of God!

He proceeded to show in the further development of his story how the claims of these preferred creditors, as they regarded themselves, would be set aside to make room for the interests of the neglected. "None of those men who were bidden (and had then treated their high privilege coldly) should taste of the supper." The servant was sent into the lanes and streets to call in the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind, that the feast might be furnished with guests.

The neglected classes made eager response. The poor had no farms to be viewed. The halt and the blind could have no part in the proving of oxen. The maimed by their physical deformities may have been precluded from marrying wives. There was no careless preoccupation here to detain them from that interest which was indeed supreme.

It is pathetic to find that in every case it was a legitimate, praiseworthy form of interest, rather than some wicked, criminal purpose, which held back these fortunate

men from the enjoyment of the feast of life contemplated in the gospel of Christ. How modern it all is! Here is a man whose purchase of a country house where he spends his week-ends, or his possession of a new automobile, or his devotion to a bride beautiful as a June morning, becomes the occasion of his leaving his seat in church empty and his share of Christian activity unperformed.

And here, as in so many somber passages of Scripture and of history, the privileged showing themselves unresponsive to the call of duty, are replaced by those who have been classed with the unprivileged. "The man with the long start in the race forfeits it to some poor straggler in the rear." By the judgments of God, here boldly declared at that dinner table of old, the mighty are put down from their seats and men of low degree are exalted.

XLI

THE MISSION TO THE GENTILES

Mark 7 : 24-30; Matt. 8 : 5-13

God is no respecter of persons or of race prejudice. There is no partiality with him. In the light of his moral interest, " there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female for all are one in Christ." He is not " my Father " nor " your Father," but " Our Father."

In the assertion of this broad sweep of the divine interest Jesus " arose and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon." He left the Galilean synagogue which had cast him out in its petty narrowness and went among the Gentiles in that wider freedom which belongs to the mission of the Son of God.

He went quietly " but he could not be hid." Human need speedily discovered his presence. There was a woman who was a Greek, a Syrophenician by birth, who had a little daughter grievously afflicted by one of those nervous maladies popularly attributed to dæmonic influence. She came and fell at the Master's feet, beseeching him to heal her child.

The disciples were annoyed by her persistence and they were distrustful as to the Master's willingness to extend his help beyond the borders of Israel. They said, " Send her away, for she crieth after us." The feeling of race prejudice at that time was keen and selfish. The man of strange speech was termed a " barbarian " — when he uttered his words they were mere " bar bar."

And the first reply which Jesus made to her appeal seemed passing strange. "Let the children first be filled — it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto the dogs." There was nothing unfamiliar in the sound of these words to the ears of the Gentile woman — "dogs" was the customary designation applied by Jews to men and women of another race.

It has seemed to many that these words sound harsh if not insolent as they fall from the lips of Christ addressed as they are to a woman in distress. But we need to hear the words in their setting. We need to supply the tone of voice and the look which accompanied them. We cannot always measure the force nor determine the quality of words by rules of syntax. The bare words "children" and "dogs" do have a strange sound!

But the associations of words are everything. When a man calls his wife a "duck" she is happy and when he calls her a "goose" she is grieved. It would seem to me that when Jesus used the familiar term "dogs" he uttered the phrase with gentle irony as indicating the absurdity of the boasted superiority of the Jew and registering his dissent from it. He would make plain the fact that he regarded the stiff race prejudice so common at that time as being trivial and ridiculous. The best test of the real import of his word is to be found in its effect — and it is clear beyond a peradventure that the Gentile woman was not offended or repelled; on the contrary, she was encouraged in her appeal.

Quick as a flash, with a mingling of humor and insistence, she answered him, "Yes, Lord, but the pet dogs, the house dogs" — this is the purport of the special word she employed — "under the table eat of the children's crumbs." It was more than a quick turn or a skillful play upon words — she would take the humble position assigned

her by race prejudice and from under the table assert a claim which was habitually recognized. There was place and provision for the pet dogs in the household economy, and there was a place for Gentiles in the divine compassion. The woman had heard not his words alone but his meaning, and by that meaning she was emboldened to repeat her appeal.

Mother-love is mother-love wherever found — it is not orthodox here and heretic there. And the pain of a child, be it Jewish or Gentile, makes its appeal to the heart of compassion with the same immediacy in every land and language of earth. And the divine pity is one whether the distress it holds in view is under the Southern Cross or near the Arctic Circle. "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" Unto him shall all our need come and come not in vain. The Master rejoiced over her persistent faith and the daughter was healed.

What an object lesson to those narrow-hearted disciples who would have sent her away! What an object lesson to all men of meager sympathies who would limit their interest and the interest of the Universal Father to those whose speech and skin and manner of life are like their own. We have in our own speech epithets roughly applied to men of other races which are as offensive to their ears as was the term "Gentile dog" to those outside the Hebrew line. So long as "Dago" and "Sheeny," "Nigger" and "Mick" fall from the lips of American-born white men, we still have need to lay the truths of this lesson to heart.

Then coupled with this account of the Master's experience in the borders of Tyre and Sidon, we have the story of the centurion who came interceding on behalf of a sick servant. The humanity of the man stands revealed in the nature of his mission — he was not making his appeal on his own behalf or for any member of his immediate family

— he was interceding for a sick slave. The ready interest of Luke in the fact that Jews and Gentiles alike were coming to share in the benefits of the coming kingdom causes him to add other details throwing light upon the character of this outsider. "The elders of the Jews" supported the request of the centurion saying "that he was worthy for whom he should do this, for he loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue."

The Master acceded to the request instantly, saying "I will come and heal him." But the centurion demurred to this generous offer — "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof — speak the word only and my servant shall be healed." Then he proceeded to explain that he was a man under discipline. He was accustomed to take orders in the Roman army where he served and to give orders to his subordinates.

He therefore thought of the whole world as "a camp of living forces." He had heard of the deeds done by this prophet of Galilee and was confident that "his word was with power." He is therefore ready to commit his case to the utterance of a command that the sick servant should be healed. He will not ask for the visible presence of the Master under his roof — he will be content with the bare assertion of his redemptive power. He had the modesty and the spirit of discipline which belong to the military man at his best.

In its very contrast to some of the treatment he had recently experienced at the hands of "his own," the deference and the unquestioning trust of this outsider touched the heart of Christ. "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." The faith of Israel on wide areas had become clouded by excessive devotion to ritual. The great vital realities were obscured by the elaborate attention given to the washing of cups and pots, to the tithing of salt

and pepper and mustard. Thus the weightier matters of justice and mercy suffered neglect.

Here is the oft-repeated truth that faith is not intellectual assent to a series of theological propositions. Faith is not the ability to accept as true a certain set of historical statements. Faith is rather an attitude of expectant confidence in the heart making it receptive. It is that attitude of expectant confidence on the part of human need in the presence of the ultimate source of help, dimly understood though it may be, which completes the connection and serves as a conductor for that power from above which is able to heal and to save.

Jesus regarded the confident expectation of this soldierly man as the first fruits of a great ingathering. He saw as in a vision multitudes of these awakened souls who stood outside the lines, coming from the east and the west to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God. He uttered ever and anon words which show that he conceived his mission as being world-wide; he was not the founder of another and a better Jewish sect; he came to proclaim a gospel which had in it the notes of universality and he would project his redemptive power into all the nations of earth.

"But the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out." Here is the reverse side of the shield! The very breadth of the gospel became an offense and a stumbling block to the narrow-hearted Hebrews. The very hospitality of the Kingdom Jesus proclaimed seemed like a denial of the worth of the traditional privilege enjoyed by the haughty ecclesiastics. His moral interest was altogether too roomy for these spiritual aristocrats, and their stiff prejudice served to cast them into outer darkness.

"The perdition of the respectable," Dean Hodges characterizes it in his telling phrase. "That we respecta-

ble, intelligent, moral, religious folk who attend church with regularity may be among the lost, we do not for a moment imagine. We take it quietly and confidently for granted, every one of us, that we shall be saved. It is quite likely that some of the men and women whose names we read in the police reports will go to hell. They ought to. That is where they belong. But we ourselves — that is a different matter."

The words of Christ open up this question afresh. "The children of the Kingdom shall be cast out." The privileged shall be held to stricter account because of the advantages they have enjoyed. And when they fall so far below the persistent faith of the Syrophenician woman or the ready confidence of the soldier under discipline, they may indeed wonder whether they will sit down in the Kingdom with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob or find themselves elsewhere. The cheap and easy virtue of outward respectability and of religious conformity is of no great moment — the venture and the heroism of faith is demanded if we would possess the Kingdom of God.

XLII

WANDERINGS IN DECAPOLIS

Mark 7 : 31-8 : 10

We find in this passage a twofold presentation of the power of Christ in bestowing life more abundant. There was the quickening of faculty in the opening of the ears of the deaf man that he might hear and the loosing of his tongue that he might speak. There was also the satisfaction of normal need portrayed in the narrative of the feeding of the four thousand by the faithful utilization of resources apparently inadequate. "Who healeth all thy diseases: who satisfieth thy mouth with good things!"

The gospel has come into the world that we might have life. It has come to make men alive at more points, alive on higher levels, alive in more effective ways. The highest benefit to be obtained from fellowship and co-operation with Christ comes in that sense of abounding life. His familiar statement in the best-known of all the parables, "This do and thou shalt live," points to the ultimate purpose of his entire ministry to the race. He that hath religion hath life, and he that hath not religion hath not real life. The highest reward of religious faith and effort comes in an enlarged capacity to live. The gospel is only accomplishing its full purpose where it is making men and communities more thoroughly, richly and usefully alive.

We see this great truth wrought out as in acted parables in the two narratives here offered for our study. Here was a man who was deaf to the murmur of the pines and to

the plash of the waves, deaf to the songs of the birds and to the laughter of little children. He was living a dull, meager, unsatisfying life in a world of unbroken silence.

In the face of such a lack it was directly in line with the main purpose of One who came to recover that which is lost that he should put his hands upon this lack of power saying, " Ephphatha, be opened." He would open up new avenues of approach to that handicapped life that through the uplifted gates a fuller message of this world of interest might enter into his personal consciousness. The Master is saying to every life that hears not the still, small voice of the Spirit of the Living God, " Be opened." He would have it react under every sort of stimulus visible or invisible, tangible or spiritual. He would have the entire world of reality perpetually finding its way into the deeper consciousness of every man.

It is just as true now as it was at the beginning that only those who have ears to hear can hear. It is also plain that only those whose ears are sensitive can hear well. In things spiritual as well as in the case of ordinary acoustic vibrations this principle stands. The world of sense and of soul is woven by a single hand throughout; there are great natural laws which have their counterpart in the spiritual realm.

When the guilty man and woman " heard the voice of the Lord God " as he walked in the garden in the cool of the day and " were frightened," the fact was full of promise. It showed that they had not persisted in their wrongdoing until the spiritual sense was atrophied. They could still hear the divine footfalls and fear because they had been doing wrong. The terrible plight belongs to those who continue in their sins until they neither hear nor fear the voice of the Lord. If you suffer because of your sins, thank God — it shows at least that you are still alive.

When the ears of this mute on the coasts of Decapolis had been opened and the string of his tongue had been unloosed so that he spoke plainly, he immediately began to use his new-found powers in spreading the news of his recovery. He went about giving thanks to the Author of this more abundant life. He would not be restrained by the counsel of the Master that he "tell no man." His joy overflowed the banks of that restraining word and he went everywhere publishing the fact of his cure.

His joyous word of testimony sounds like a bit plucked from some glad "Te Deum." "He hath done all things well; he maketh the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." And what better use could be made of blessings received than to make them at once widely vocal in the expression of personal gratitude, thus pointing other crippled lives to the same available source of help?

In the face of such an achievement as this and with the report of it being heralded far and wide we are not surprised to read in the latter half of the lesson that a crowd surrounded Christ, following him in the enthusiasm of the hour into a desert place where there was no food. "In those days the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him and said, I have compassion on the multitude because they have now been with me three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way for divers of them came from afar."

There are a number of reasons why objection is raised to the credibility of this narrative of a repetition of the miraculous feeding of a multitude. Many scholars insist that it is a slightly altered account of the feeding of the five thousand recorded in a previous chapter which somehow found its way into the collection of materials from which the gospels were composed. The verbal resemblances in the

two accounts are remarkable, a score or more of words and expressions being identical in both. The miracle is said to have occurred at a time when Jesus seems to have practically closed his ministry in Galilee. The causes for the assembling of such a crowd and for their continuance with him for three days into a desert region seem to be less clear in this connection than in the account of the feeding of the five thousand.

Whatever may be the exact truth in the matter — it may not be within our power at this long remove to ascertain — whether there were two miracles, one to satisfy the needs of five thousand from five loaves and another to satisfy the needs of four thousand from seven loaves, or whether the second narrative grew out of certain minor variations in the repeated narration of the original occurrence, the more important spiritual lessons symbolized in the story of physical occurrences are clear.

The ready compassion of Jesus took account of the most commonplace need. He would not allow a hungry crowd, idle wonder-seekers though they were, to pass unnoticed. He would not have his followers fretted and forever anxious regarding the things they are to eat and to wear, yet he knew that we have need of all these things. When his disciples counseled him to "send the multitude away," he refused to send them away fasting lest they should faint by the way. He threw the responsibility for meeting that mass of need back upon those twelve men whom he had in training for a mighty service. "They need not go away, give ye them to eat."

The disciples were naturally dismayed and staggered by such a demand upon their ability. "Whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?" they asked. The very statement of the problem seemed sufficient to indicate the impossibility of any solution,

Jesus answered, "How many loaves have you?" They did not know, but they went out to investigate. Presently they reported "Seven." They told him all they knew about that baffling situation and they put into his hands all they had in available resource. They were soon to learn new lessons as to the wondrous unfolding of ability and the multiplication of resource which ensues where men put all they have into the service of the highest they see.

The disciples were still in the primary room of religious nurture. They were just learning their first lessons as to the reserve power of their Master and of the unrealized possibilities in every common situation. It became the high office of the Master to instruct them more perfectly in the high privileges of that relationship they had come to sustain. He would reveal to them the latent energies in every field of human experience where need must be met from materials apparently inadequate. He would show them how latent energies could be summoned into action and directed into glorious achievement as they became enlisted in an effective co-operation with the limitless energy of the Eternal.

The ancient story of the feeding of a multitude is soon told, but the process here symbolized of unfolding and developing resource in everyday life when once the life stands pledged to the service of the Highest is inexhaustible.

"What am I?" you hear some man say at the beginning of his Christian life. "How many loaves have I, do you suppose, all told?" He does not know. No one knows — that is to say, no one except the One who creates every man with undeclared, unsuspected powers of usefulness.

The method of the Kingdom of Heaven is like the method of a grain of mustard seed. When the tiny thing is sown in Mother Earth, it seems like the least of all seeds. But when it is grown, having entered into effective co

operation with the mighty forces of earth and sky, it becomes the greatest among herbs. Let any item of energy or resource be brought into real cooperation with the divine purpose and the possible outcome cannot be foretold.

XLIII

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Mark 9: 2-13

When any man undertakes to write about the transfiguration and then holds up his sheet in the clear light which streams from the narrative in the Gospels, he is ready to apply to himself the words of criticism passed upon Peter's foolish offer, " He wist not what to say." The holy mount is a place to feel, to adore, to aspire, rather than to talk.

In all three of the synoptic gospels the glorious scene is cast directly upon the dark screen made by the reference of Jesus to the tragic end which awaited him. We see his radiant face and his shining raiment against the background of the cross. He had been saying, " The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the chief priests and be killed," when he led his three intimates, Peter and James and John (always these privileged three in times of spiritual crisis), up into the mountain apart where he was transfigured.

" He led them up into a high mountain apart " — the physical situation conforming to the leading features in the notable spiritual experience they were to enjoy. They were to stand on a higher level of feeling, to enjoy a nobler mood, to breathe a purer air, to be lifted into the sense of a more exalted fellowship.

Luke tells us that " He went up into a mountain to pray, and as he prayed the fashion of his countenance was altered." Luke has more to say about prayer than any

other of the four evangelists. He alone records the fact that "as Jesus was praying in a certain place," his disciples, stirred to aspiration by the sight of his devotion, said to him when he ceased, "Lord, teach us to pray." Luke alone records the parables of "The Friend at Midnight," "The Unjust Judge" and "The Pharisee and the Publican" who went into the temple to pray, each one throwing a flood of light upon this most exalted of all spiritual exercises.

"*As he prayed*, the fashion of his countenance was altered." With a few swift strokes Luke draws a bold cartoon portraying a vast spiritual process. The fleshly atoms of the human countenance bow to the supremacy of the spirit within. The dull, sordid, sensual look of the man careless of all spiritual values is altered when he becomes a man of prayer. The months and years come and go, but as he prays there comes into his face a more radiant look.

"There is sometimes in the face a solar light which rises from the activity of the higher nature when conscience is supreme." Who can say but that when "the higher nature is put into full action that radiant look might beam from the whole man!" Who that has looked into the face of Phillips Brooks in some of those great hours in Trinity Church, Boston, as he pleaded with men for their souls, or into the face of Maud Ballington Booth as she made intercession on behalf of the poor moral failures in the prisons, has not seen there the gleams of that "solar light" which comes by the supremacy of the higher nature within?

It may be that our Lord, walking already in the shadow of the cross and foreseeing the tragic end of his beneficent career on earth, felt at this hour an especial need of prayer. He went up into the mountain to wait upon the Father that he might renew his strength. And there he dwelt in

the power of those high purposes of self-devotement to which he had just given expression and in the ennobling sense of an exalted fellowship with the Father until the radiance of his inner life shone through the temple of flesh.

It is written that when Moses came down from the mount with the tables of the law in his hands and in his heart and in his hope for Israel, his face shone so that the sordid worshipers of the golden calf could not look upon him. It is written that when Stephen was on trial for his life before the Sanhedrin and was permitted to give a reason for the glorious hope that was in him, "all that sat in the council looking steadfastly on him saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." It is written in the annals of age-long and world-wide experience that when any life yields itself to the supremacy of the highest there comes into the very face a new look of light and joy, a veritable spiritual effulgence. If we accept the principle underlying these facts of experience and carry it up to the *nth* power, may we not find at the summit the very phenomena here recorded in the narrative of the Transfiguration?

In that high hour there came the sense of heavenly visitants and the sound of a heavenly voice. "There appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him." The two mysterious presences were named by the disciples "Moses" and "Elijah" not perhaps as the representatives of "the law and the prophets"; they were so named because both these famous leaders of Israel had left the world in mysterious fashion and all devout Hebrews believed that they would mysteriously reappear.

"And they spake with him of the decease" — literally the "exodus" — "which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." The word is rich in its associations. It marked

one of the great turning points in the history of Israel. And so far had they already come under the power of the Christian hope, that death was already regarded not as an indignity to be suffered, but rather an achievement to be "accomplished"; it was no more an "end of life," but an "exodus," a going out, a deliverance from the bondage incident to earthly conditions into the promised land of freedom.

And the same heavenly voice which at the baptism made itself heard saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" here again fell upon the ears of the wondering disciples with its authoritative credential. "This is my beloved Son — hear ye him." It was an hour when every spiritual faculty was alert and sensitive — and within the range of personal consciousness there came unwonted visions and voices.

Impulsive Peter, feeling that such high privileges must not be allowed to pass, but that they should be housed and retained for permanent enjoyment, proposed that they take up their residence in that favored spot. "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles" (literally "three huts," temporary dwelling places), that these mysterious visitants might be induced to stay. He would build one for Moses, the man of moral insight, who at the top of the mount saw the face of the divine and the eternal principles of right and wrong, as it were face to face. He would build one for Elijah, the man of moral energy, who, in the face of a vacillating king swerved by his heathen wife from his rightful allegiance to Jehovah and in the face of a fickle people halting between two opinions as to the relative merits of Jehovah and Baal, stood out single-handed, winning his victory there at Carmel. And he would build one for Jesus, the Man of moral remedy, who in his work of spiritual recovery would achieve what

the law could not do, who would not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax with relentless energy, but would gather the failures into his affectionate interest and make possible for them a glad newness of life.

The impulsive man was right in wishing to retain the benefits of that hour of privilege. But not in "huts," were these blessings to be housed and held — these gains were to be retained in hearts made fit to serve as dwelling places for the divine. The experience became for Peter an exalted memory and an abiding source of inspiration. "We were eye witnesses of his majesty, for he received from God the Father honor and glory when there came such a voice to him, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount."

Such hours of high privilege are intended for us all according to the measure of our receptivity. The narrative shows us an enlarged and intensified picture of spiritual experience which is meant to be representative of the privileges open to all aspiring hearts. We, too, may go apart with the Master of our souls and walk with him on higher levels. We may breathe that upper, purer air. We may know and enjoy the diviner moods. We may be lifted into the sense of exalted fellowships. And our own faces may be illumined by the radiant strength of our devotions.

Some face may seem to be made of ordinary clay. But that same face may yet see the day when it will shine like porcelain with a light behind. The sense of a filial relationship to the Infinite Father, the spirit of good will toward all one's fellow-beings, and the keen aspiration for a holy life may be so real and strong as to cause that radiance of soul to shine through its temple of flesh. When men pray, really and truly pray, and then give expression

in daily conduct to the highest they have felt in their hours of devotion, the fashion of their countenances is in like manner altered. Reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord before whom they stand with unveiled hearts, they too are changed into the same image.

XLIV

THE LUNATIC BOY

Mark 9 : 14-29

We should at once term it a case of epilepsy. "He foameth and gnasheth with his teeth." The malady was intermittent — "Lo, a spirit taketh him and he suddenly crieth out." While they were bringing the boy to Christ "the spirit tore him and he fell on the ground and wallowed." He sometimes suffered from one of these attacks most inopportunely — "Ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire and into the water to destroy him."

The malady was further aggravated by the fact that his mental and nervous condition bordered upon incipient insanity as is not infrequent, and Matthew calls him "lunatic." It was one of those grievous cases, full of mystery and of difficulty, which baffle the skill of eminent specialists to this hour. We can sympathize with the disciples in their futile efforts to effect a cure.

This appeal for help came hard upon the glorious experiences on the Mount of Transfiguration. The close connection of the two events is noted in all the synoptic Gospels and it is significant. The true splendor of life at its best does not build tabernacles at the mountain top that it may dwell securely apart from the world's pain and grief. It gathers to itself the full strength to be gained in such places of privilege and then comes down. It descends from that higher level where it prayed until its face shone and the soul was caught up into the full enjoyment of exalted fellowship, that it may heal the hurts along the dusty highway at the foot of the mountain.

The appeal was heartfelt — it was the voice of a father interceding for his child. He plead not for himself but for that other life for whose very existence he was responsible. His painful narrative of the child's sufferings fairly bleeds. When Jesus asked, "How long is it since this came to him?" the stored up anguish of years was in his terse reply — "Of a child!"

His sense of need was desperate; he had heard of the marvelous cures wrought by this Man of Galilee, yet facing the staggering difficulties of the case, he is torn by a profound distrust. "If thou *canst* do anything" — he was uncertain for it seemed too good to be true — "if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

Jesus promptly indicated that the possibility of a cure would turn upon the father's own attitude of heart. The determining conditions would be found there rather than in Christ. "If thou canst do anything" — the father cried! Nay, rather, "If thou canst believe," replied the Master! He demanded faith as well as sympathetic interest; he made confidence in that Source of help to which all our need must come at last, the determining factor in the recovery of the child.

Then the man brought out all his reserves of feeling and resolve. "He cried out and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe.'" His heart said that — it could say nothing else. But he was a mature man — he had reached that age where we no longer leap fences nor leap to conclusions as we did in the days of our youth. He was a man accustomed to weigh his words and in the presence of difficulties so grave he added in more cautious fashion "Help thou mine unbelief."

What an accurate picture of a modern mood pathetically common! The heart of the race deeply conscious of its

spiritual lack, enraptured with the commanding visions of the Christian gospel, realizing in the depths of its own soul the final and ultimate authority of the Christian ethic, cries, "Lord, I believe." Then the cautious, critical intelligence confronted with the sobering demands made upon its credence by historical Christianity, unwilling to profess assent where full assent is not actually existent, adds somewhat reluctantly "Help thou mine unbelief."

The hopeful feature in the situation was to be found in the father's readiness to show fidelity to an imperfect faith. He had not much faith but he had some, and what he had he was ready to use. When any man stands ready to pledge what he has to the highest he sees, and to stake his all on the best his halting confidence is able to affirm as possible, we may look for results. Jesus in the face of such an appeal to the Highest rebuked the forces of evil which were oppressing the boy and "took him by the hand and lifted him up — and he arose." The loving and life-giving energy of the Master prevailed where the feebler efforts of the disciples had failed.

When they were alone "his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we?" Jesus answered, "This kind can come forth by nothing but prayer and fasting." There was a lack of spiritual vitality. "They had not been good enough to make their personality tell."

"Why could not we?" — in the narrative contained in Matthew's Gospel Jesus adds, "Because of your unbelief." There was a want of personal confidence in God. The spiritual energy which shows itself able to heal and to save grows not out of doubts and denials but out of confident affirmation and glorious trust. If they had possessed even "a grain" of vital faith that such a malady would yield to the form of help they represented, they would have seen mountains of obstacle giving way before

the advance of their trust. They had seen the glory of the Lord shining like the sun in its brightness, but down at the foot of that place of privilege they had failed in their work.

"What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" Jesus answered, "This is the work of God that ye believe." This was his steadfast insistence. "If thou canst believe — all things are possible to him that believeth." In these days of resolute and widespread attention, by men of science and by men of religion alike, to the bearing of mental and spiritual forces upon the healing of various physical disorders we are but brushing the surface of the hidden depths of divine help here suggested.

Every minister who has worked in a great city has seen the craving for liquor in some defeated life banished within an hour by the mighty potencies which are called into action by personal faith in God. The promise made of old under such different and untoward conditions, "The spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee and thou shalt be turned into another man," is receiving abundant and unmistakable fulfillment on many a field of effort for the recovery of human personality from its load of disordered nerves, of depraved appetities, of corrupted instincts.

It would be a loss unspeakable if "the social engineer" or "the parochial superintendent" in his scientific management of various agencies for the amelioration of outward conditions, rendering them more favorable to the slow development of character, should neglect or discount the power of the gospel of the Son of God in immediate personal regeneration. The intelligent, confident, winsome offer of this ineffable privilege to every baffled and broken life is indispensable to human progress.

The Master's service was personal — he did not suggest

the appointment of a "Commission on Epilepsy." He did not wait for the establishment of thoroughly equipped institutions. "He took him by the hand and lifted him up — and he arose." The final symbol of humane service is the extended hand, open, friendly, ready to lift. It can never be superseded by institutional methods.

The Master honored and utilized a halting, imperfect faith. He helped the unbelief entangled with a bit of genuine confidence into something better. "If you have a bud on your rosebush that you want should blossom, the last device you would think of resorting to would be to detach the bud from the stalk and toss it into the air. And yet that is precisely what hosts of young people are doing today who are questioning — which is perfectly proper — but nipping the fiber of connection which would unite what they do doubt with what they do not doubt. Buds of doubt do not blossom and become conviction," says Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, "when separated from the live stock of assurance."

The Master brought out the fact that human incapacity to overcome the ills and hurts of society is due not so much to the lack of technique as to the lack of genuineness and thoroughness in the inner life. If any man would cast out devils he must by devotion and self-denial first cast the devils out of himself. Only then will he become competent to take needy lives and lift them up.

The Master made plain the fact that every hour of high privilege must speedily find expression for that which has been gained in some form of humane service. It would remain barren and dishonored were it to build itself tabernacles of retreat where it might meditate upon the glories of past dispensations and upon the joys of personal enrichment in forgetfulness of the lives torn and wretched in the plain below. It is for privileged lives to take the un-

privileged by the hand, by the mind and by the heart in the direct clasp of personal sympathy and lift them up.

The social settlement inspired and sustained from some center of religious devotion, the summer camp for needy children made possible by the gifts and the personal devotion of those who have seen the radiant face of Christ, the outdoor sanitariums for tubercular patients from the crowded warrens of the poor in our great cities, all of them showing the word of Christian brotherhood made flesh and dwelling among us full of grace and truth, are visible projections of the glory of worship and communion into patient, lowly forms of unselfish service.

When Jesus had healed the child and delivered him sound and sane to his father, "they were all amazed at the *Majesty* of God." The confident assertion of the supremacy of the sovereign grace and good will of the Unseen over human ills was indeed majestic!

XLV

THE RIGHT USE OF THE SABBATH

Luke 13 : 10-17; 14 : 1-6

" He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath " — and there came the opportunity for service. It was his custom. He was found in the place of worship habitually. We read again and again how this custom brought him face to face with the human need which had come to be near the source of divine help.

When Peter and John went to the Temple to pray they found at the gate called " Beautiful " a cripple laid there daily to ask help from those who entered into the Temple. Human need just over the threshold from the whole system of divine help represented by the Temple! And on that occasion the faith and the sympathy of Peter were sufficient to lift that bit of need over the threshold into a full realization of God's healing power. The lame man was presently " walking and leaping and praising God in the Temple."

There in the synagogue where Jesus taught " was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years. She was bowed together and could in nowise lift herself up." Without more careful diagnosis we would say that she was either paralyzed or had some spinal trouble. In that earlier time when nervous maladies were even more mysterious than they are with us, the simple people attributed her inability to the presence of some malevolent spirit within. They believed that a " spirit of infirmity " had twisted the poor woman out of shape so that she could not lift herself up.

She had suffered in this way for eighteen years. Eighteen years is a long time for those who are active, but to a woman who is sick the time seems endless. She could scarcely remember the day when she walked down street with the ease and grace of healthy womanhood. The long drawn-out illness had twisted her spirit until it also was awry.

"When Jesus saw her, he called her to him." His own sympathetic soul made instant response to the appeal of need. And the woman came, creeping and hobbling as best she could, for human need with a kind of clairvoyance heard in his tones that note of hope which caused it to respond.

When she was near to him, he said: "Thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her and immediately she was made straight." What a splendid deed of mercy! How the synagogue would feel itself honored in being made the scene of such a work of recovery! How the worshipers there assembled on the Sabbath would rejoice in witnessing such a signal expression of the divine love!

Alas, no! There are eyes in which ritual is more beautiful than mercy. There are noses, keen and sharp, to which burnt offerings are more fragrant than deeds of love. There are natures which find more joy in the detailed observance of a system than in all the unselfish ministry of affection.

"The ruler of the synagogue" — the head man in the church — "answered with indignation because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath." He said to the people (and we can hear the hiss of bigotry and hatred when we read his words aloud), "There are six days in which men ought to work — in them therefore come and be healed and not on the Sabbath." It seems incredible, yet there it is in black and white — in black rather for there is nothing white about it.

The woman was "loosed from her infirmity"! What is the day for but for loosing? The weary toiler is "loosed" from the ordinary grind that he may straighten up and see life in truer perspective. The factory hand is "loosed" from his machine that he may take his place among his loved ones at home for twenty-four hours together and realize that he is not a "hand," but a brain, a heart, a soul. The mind is "loosed" from the shallow puddles of interest in which of necessity it must oftentimes employ itself for six days that it may drink from the deep, sweet wells of genuine literature and find its needs refreshed. The whole workaday world is "loosed" from the pressing necessity of striving to make a living, that in places of instruction, of worship and of aspiration it may take thought concerning the vaster interest of making a life. The Lord is in his holy temple loosing his children from those disabilities which bow them down — let all the earth give thanks before him!

"She was made straight and glorified God." The day was ordained for just that. Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it sacred to the high task of making men straight. When their backs are bent by remorseless toil let the day of rest cause them to stand up straight where the ceiling is high and no soul need stoop. When the lower levels of experience have left in the inner life many a kink, let men come on the Sabbath into the presence of those ideals and principles, those moods and aspirations, which cause the best within us to stand straight, adding a full cubit to its stature. When the mind is bent awry and twisted into ugly deformity by false views of life spread before us in newspapers, or thrust upon us in the scramble for gain, or imposed upon us like ill-fitting garments by the conventions of a thoughtless society, let it be bent back into normal shape by finer forms of instruction and fellowship on this day.

The attitude of the synagogue-ruler was so unreasonable and inhuman that the Lord exclaimed: "Thou hypocrite! Doth not each of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall and lead him to water? Ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham (in contrast to the dumb beast), bound these eighteen years, be loosed from her bond on the Sabbath?"

Humane considerations take precedence over the demands of ritual observance. The night after the earthquake in San Francisco twenty-six babies were born in the parks to which the people had been driven by the fire. The little outfits lovingly prepared by the hands of affection in joyous anticipation were all destroyed by the flames. And to provide for the needs of these children and of their anxious mothers twenty sewing machines were running all day the following Sunday in the prayer-meeting room of the First Congregational Church of Oakland. When I looked in upon the busy scene where a score of Christian women were unselfishly fashioning the dainty garments, I felt that the One who said, "I was naked and ye clothed me," would feel that the day had never been more sacredly honored in that place of prayer.

In the other passage here offered for our study the minister who had taught and healed in the synagogue is invited to share the Sunday dinner with one of the leading church members. "He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath — and they watched him."

Here again need found him — "there was a certain man before him who had the dropsy." When a magnet is drawn through sand where there is a sprinkling of iron filings, it gathers them all to itself. When the Master of compassion moved among the multitudes who thronged him, he drew to himself the appeal of need and the touch of faith.

When Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees present, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" they held their peace. They were sullen in the face of this radiant mercy which so far transcended their dull, cold piety. They were dumb and unresponsive as stone walls when their hearts should have leaped at this manifestation of a higher truth regarding Sabbath observance. But all undeterred by their want of sympathy, Jesus "healed the man and let him go."

To show the further absurdity and cruelty of their position, he added, "Which of you shall have an ass fallen into a pit and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath?" The claims of common humanity have the right of way, sidetracking all those minor requirements contained in the letter of the law because "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath."

The illustration of the unfortunate ass need not be pressed on all fours. In one of our Christian colleges a sophomore was found studying on Sunday. This was contrary to the usage of the institution. The professor who had chanced upon him remonstrated with him. But the student replied, "We have a stiff examination coming tomorrow and I am not ready for it. The Bible allows a man to pull his ass out of the pit on the Sabbath Day — how much more permissible, then, would be the effort of the ass to pull himself out."

It may be seriously questioned whether the real work of education is advanced by studying on Sunday. The men who crossed the plains to California after the discovery of gold in 1849 found that the observance of one rest day in seven was expedient as well as godly. The men who rested their ox teams and their horses on Sunday reached the Golden Gate ahead of those who had driven straight through without a break and their animals were in much better condition for the steadily recurring truce of God.

There is good reason for believing that students who set apart the Sabbath for interests and activities more directly spiritual will likewise make a steadier advance toward the golden key of Phi Beta Kappa.

The letter may kill the meaning of the day for pietistic Pharisees, but the spirit of rightful observance will make the human race more truly alive. Let the day be used for loosing, for straightening, for healing those lives which are bound, twisted and weakened by the rough experiences of the other six days.

XLVI

LESSONS BY THE WAY

Luke 13 : 18-35

Here we have a collection, not a series, of sayings taken from the lips of our Lord! His teaching for the most part was occasional rather than systematic. He was in the best sense an " opportunist " responding to the need of the hour. He stood at a wide remove from that orderly, methodical, symmetrical style of teaching to be found in universities. In these passages we find " lessons by the way."

In the first we have the grouping of two parables which should always be considered together. " To what is the Kingdom of Heaven like? It is like a grain of mustard seed. It is like leaven." They both proclaim the fact and the law of growth. They both illustrate the growth of His Kingdom from insignificant beginnings into a moral empire which would cover the earth. But they do it with a difference.

The development of the mustard seed into a tree large enough for birds to lodge in shows the organized, external and visible growth of those influences and institutions which have to do with the establishment of the Kingdom. The parable of the leaven shows the subtle, invisible energies working beneath the surface to permeate and transform human society as with a new principle of life.

In the one case the spread of the Kingdom was like the work of the tiny seed as it grew into a splendid plant with roots, trunk, branches and leaves, symbolizing in visible terms the work wrought by men on behalf of the truth in

organized fashion. In the other the Kingdom grew as if the deft hand of a woman had hidden a bit of yeast in three measures of meal. The work was done out of sight by the power of that subtle spiritual contagion where one life communicates of its best to its fellow, it scarce knows how. Both of these methods of work are necessary for the perfect accomplishment of that aspiration expressed when we say, "Thy Kingdom come — thy will be done on earth."

We are not to estimate forces by their outward bulk — we are to appraise them according to their genuine vitality. The size of the force may be like a grain of mustard seed which is the least of seeds or like the tiny bacilli of the leaven, yet the result may be of commanding importance.

"What are you doing?" the Sunday school teacher is asked as he sits with a group of boys in quiet converse. "I am sowing seed," he replies as he drops here an ideal, there a principle, yonder an illuminating illustration, further on a direct word of appeal. He is sowing seed in that eager soil known as "boy life." When he has gone to his reward another generation may see stately, productive trees of righteousness growing in the midst of the street where the tides of civic and commercial life flow swiftly. These sturdy trees of righteousness came into being as a result of that early planting of good seed.

"What are you doing?" some member of society who makes a business of living a quiet, unobtrusive but potent life of Christian devotion, is asked. "I am putting my bit of leaven into the lump of life," is the reply. And when the people of that community find the whole section of human interest touched by that woman's influence made more palatable, more wholesome, more nourishing, through the leavening power of her fine quality of soul, her word is fulfilled.

The greatest need in the world today is not so much for

a change in the outward structure of our social institutions as for the leavening influence of a new spirit within. It will matter little whether we are living under a competitive system or a collective system, under a capitalist *régime* or under a socialistic *régime*, if we still remain selfish and grasping. In that event the big dogs will get the best bones under either system and the small dogs will take what is left.

In the second passage Jesus was "teaching his way through cities and villages, journeying on toward Jerusalem," when one said to him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" He may have been a man of idle curiosity, merely desirous of an estimate upon the final population of the upper and of the under world when the processes of redemption had been fully wrought out. He may have been one of those men who are always eager to engage in a discussion touching intricate theological puzzles. He may, however, have been one of the many who carry burdens on their hearts. They are asking in the face of these searching requirements of Christian standards, "Who, then, can be saved?" They are wondering, not so much about their own possible fate, as touching the interests of some of the dear dead who have passed out of this life without having met anything like the full demands of an evangelical repentance and conversion. When we listen closely we can almost detect a wistful, sympathetic note in this serious question — "Are there few that be saved?"

If it were so, as a majority of the theologians of former days taught with vigor and rigor, would He not have said so? Had the answer to that question been a plain, "Yes, only a few"; and had that view been "essential to morality," then surely, as Canon Farrar insisted in his famous sermons in Westminster Abbey on "Eternal Hope," it

would have been worse than dangerous, it would have been wicked to withhold that fact.

"But what is the answer of divine wisdom? Is it some glaring agony of fire and brimstone for billions of years? No — it is a refusal to answer. It is a strong warning to the questioner. It is a tacit rebuke of the very question. It is the pointing to a strait gate and a narrow way whereby alone we can enter the Kingdom of God."

The silences of Scripture no less than the utterances are to be regarded. And the principle of wise reserve here maintained by our Lord might well have been imitated by some of those fiery preachers who have undertaken to be wise beyond what is known.

The coarse terrorism indulged in by an earlier dogmatism at once fierce and narrow did not in the long run make for righteousness. If we should write over against the names of those who were impelled to a life of obedience by the threats of coming penalty, the names of those other souls who were repelled by the unreason and injustice oft embodied in such appeals, it may be doubted if the statement of account would show any balance to the credit of such teaching.

We can scarcely realize today that only a few years ago a great and honored missionary organization was almost disrupted by the reluctance of certain candidates for the foreign field to make dogmatic affirmation on this point. But it was found that the appointment of those Andover graduates did not "cut the nerve of missions." And today the largest contribution received from any one church for that Missionary Board comes from a church which has been fed for thirty years upon the higher forms of idealism connected with the work of foreign missions rather than upon the cruder notion of rescue from endless, fiery penalty.

But along with his principle of reserve there is the utmost seriousness in the reply of Jesus: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate. Many will seek to enter and will not be able." There would be cases of moral indecision which would finally pass beyond remedy. The master of the house would have shut the door, not because of any arbitrary attitude within — the words indicate rather that persistence in evil which becomes determining as to the future of the soul.

There would come men insisting upon their having been in familiar contact with Christian institutions — "We have eaten in thy presence and thou hast taught in our streets" — and therefore claiming admission to the Kingdom only to be refused for lack of vital godliness. There would be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" when such souls saw the saints of old in the Kingdom and themselves thrust out. The seriousness and the reserve are equally manifest in the reply of Jesus to his questioner. There is no light-hearted assumption that because God is so good, all men will be saved. There is that reserve which would undertake no estimate as to the proportion of those who would finally be lost.

The third passage contains the message to Herod and the broken-hearted Lament over the city of Jerusalem. The wicked Tetrarch sought to frighten Jesus out of his jurisdiction by a threat to kill him. But the Master was not deflected from his course because the wicked imagined a vain thing. "Go tell that fox," he said in bold arraignment of his crafty, cruel nature, "that I cast out devils today and do cures tomorrow and the third day I shall be perfected." He came to do the will of One who sent him and he shared in the serenity of the Eternal.

Then turning toward Jerusalem, which had "killed its prophets and stoned" its benefactors, in solemn anticipa-

tion of its tragic refusal of his own overtures of mercy, he utters that word which is like an infinite sob.

The tender brooding of his spirit of compassion over that city which had shown itself so hateful and repellent would serve as a fitting prelude to that prayer of pity and of hope which he uttered on behalf of the wicked men who were torturing him upon the cross. "O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings and ye would not! Ye would not! Your house is left unto you desolate!" And in that sad hour when he thus uttered his moral anguish over the city that he loved, his own great heart was desolate!

XLVII

FOUR STRAIGHT WORDS

Luke 17 : 1-10

Here are four balls sent right over the plate! The evil of causing others to sin — " It is impossible but that offenses will come but woe unto him through whom they come." The duty of forgiveness — " If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; if he repent, forgive him." The energy of faith — " If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed ye might say to this tree, ' Be thou rooted up and planted in the sea.' " The outstanding obligation to fulfill one's plain duty — " When ye have done all those things which are commanded, ye have done only that which it was your duty to do."

The Master frankly faced the fact that through the wrong exercise of human freedom evil is inevitable. With all his brave optimism he never indulged in any intellectual shuffling or in any of those literary flourishes which would assert that " there is no such thing as sin, sickness, disease or death, except as an illusion of mortal mind." He stood ever with his feet firmly planted on fact. " It is impossible but that offenses will come."

But the steady emergence of evil did not blind his eyes to the culpability of those who made themselves responsible for it. We can do otherwise — therefore we must. " Woe to him by whom the offense cometh." It were better for him to have a millstone hanged about his neck and be cast into the sea than to become responsible for the moral lapse of a single soul.

We cannot escape the law of moral solidarity any more than matter can escape the power of gravitation knitting all the heavenly bodies into a universe. We are members one of another, whether we like it or not. If one man sins, other men are encouraged to sin with him. If one man is a saint, the whole moral level of that section of society where his influence counts receives a friendly lift. Woe to that man who vitiates the moral atmosphere about him by low aims, meager ideals, petty aspirations which never rise above the tree-tops! Blessed is that man, the outbreathing of whose soul helps to clear the air!

"If thy brother sin, rebuke him; if he repent, forgive him!" The ministry of forgiveness and restoration is to be close linked with that of opposition and warning. The hot-lipped censor forever engaged in denouncing other men's sins has need to read the verse clear through. The high task imposed by Christ is not half performed when one has simply uttered his telling rebuke in the face of wrong. The work of binding up the heart broken by sin and of setting at liberty the will bruised by evildoing still remains.

If I should state openly my own estimate upon the power of absolution and of moral recovery resident in human sympathy you might not believe me. You might feel that I was extravagant. Let me quote One whom you will believe! "Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose sins ye retain they are retained. Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

Jesus said that. He said it to flesh and blood. He was not entrusting to those eleven faulty men any official prerogative like "the power of the keys." He was addressing them as representatives of Christian society. Let the Christian element in society — or "The Beloved Commu-

nity," as Professor Royce would say — become careless and harsh in its attitudes, binding men and women in their sins by its swift condemnation, and those sins which are bound on earth become bound in the realm of moral permanence! Let the Christian element in society, with that fine insight for better things which comes by the exercise of genuine sympathy, loose those souls from their sins, and what is loosed on earth is loosed in the realm of moral permanence! There is a mighty power of moral absolution not official, but personal, attaching to the right exercise of human sympathy.

The statute of limitations is not to operate against it. "If he sin seven times in the day and seven times repent, thou shalt forgive." The number "seven" was the Jewish number for completeness. Let the forgiveness be complete in quality, wiping the slate clean with no harking back to rake up old scores! Let the forgiveness be complete in quantity — repeat it indefinitely until the need for it shall have been fully met.

"Have faith in God!" What a mighty form of energy is here suggested! The men of science are speaking these days of energy stored in one particle of Radium sufficient to lift five hundred tons of pig iron and carry it a mile. Here is the Master of the Ages speaking of a tremendous energy resident in a form of power subtler and mightier than Radium. "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you might root up trees with a word and cast them into the sea."

In our less highly colored method of speech we would have said that even a slender amount of faith may accomplish great results. The Oriental lives nearer the sun. He speaks habitually of the camel and the needle's eye, of the finger of God casting out the devils of nervous disease, of the seed-like faith rooting up trees and hurling them

into the ocean. The truth is the same whatever robes it wears.

The world is entering into a truer appreciation of those energies which are suggested by the word "faith." The steady utilization of mental and spiritual forces in the securing and maintenance of a fuller measure of physical health is everywhere. The minds of men are being directed afresh to forms of power invisible. The X-rays shining through flesh and coat sleeve, through thick book or barn door if need be, revealing plainly that which heretofore has been hidden from men's eyes, tell us of more forms of light than our philosophy had dreamed of. The wireless telegraphy enabling the ships to whisper to each other across the sea, has shown us that the simple air we breathe has in it potencies hitherto unsuspected ready to become the useful servants of intelligence.

In a hundred ways the unseen has come to have a hold upon the interest, the imagination and the activities of men scarcely equalled in those days of a simple credulity which peopled the air with friendly spirits or with threatening hobgoblins. The fact that growing knowledge has again and again rebuked the dogmatism which would deny all efficacy to faith and prayer (believing in its narrow ignorance that the returns were all in when once material substance had been weighed on hay scales), has aided in making our age more responsive to the claims of faith.

"Why could not we cast it out?" the disciples asked. Jesus answered, "Because of your unbelief." "There is no uncertainty in the diagnosis," says Dr. Jowett. "The cause is not complicated. It is single and simple. There had been a want of confidence. There was doubt at the very heart of the disciple's effort. There was a cold fear at the very core of his enterprise. Because of your unbelief."

Power comes not through the ability to make critical denials, but through the ability to make positive affirmations by faith. We can scarcely set a limit to it. The words about the tree are figurative, but their content is not one whit too strong. I have a friend here in New Haven whose appetite for liquor piled mountain high by years of sinful, intemperate indulgence, was rooted up and cast into the sea in an hour by the energy of his faith in Jesus Christ. From that day to this he has been living not only a sober life, but living without that wretched craving which once sent him reeling from saloon to saloon until it cast him into the gutter. He tells everybody the glad story of his salvation through faith in Christ. He is giving his life of devoted Christian service to the recovery of other men possessed by the same devil which once held him fast. Have faith in God — all things are possible to him who believes!

The Master then indicated the clear obligation resting upon every man to do that which it is his duty to do without pluming himself upon it afterward. In his picture of the "unprofitable servant" he draws a contrast between the spirit of a servant and the spirit of a son. The servant did what he was paid to do, neither receiving nor deserving any overflowing measure of thanks. The son recognized the identity of his interests with those of the One who says, "All that I have is thine." He was ready to go the second mile, giving generously of his strength and causing his righteousness to exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

No man's performance can ever exceed his duty because it is every man's duty to do his best. The uncalculating, overflowing spontaneity of service stands within that higher obligation felt by the one who has risen above the demands contracted for by the letter into the more exacting liberty

of the spirit. He is no longer a servant but a son. He does that which it is his joy to do.

The theory of a treasury of surplus merit heaped up by "deeds of supererogation" performed by saints, was only a device of ecclesiastical tricksters. They were always ready to trade in spiritual "futures," offering them in blocks for cash down. The whole scheme was a cruel imposition upon the credulous heart hungry for an assurance of divine mercy. When the saints have done their best, they have only done that which it was their duty to do.

The work of Jesus and of Paul was done so thoroughly that most of us can scarcely realize the necessity which once existed for replacing the legalism of a measured and sharply defined service by the glad sense of freedom and of filial participation in the vast enterprises of our Heavenly Father.

XLVIII

THE GRATEFUL SAMARITAN

Luke 17 : 11-19

How the approach of Christ called out human need! He sat at meat in Simon's house and the woman whose sins were many was drawn to his feet seeking forgiveness. He entered Jericho and the man who was a sinner was waiting for him in a sycamore tree as if dimly conscious that salvation might "pass that way." It was noised about that he was in a certain house and "straightway all the city was gathered at the door" bringing "many that were sick with divers diseases." He was robed in helpfulness, so that the hem of his garment invited the touch of need.

"He was passing between Samaria and Galilee and as he entered a certain village there met him ten men who were lepers." Nine of them were Jews and one a Samaritan. There on the frontier between Galilee and Samaria a common malady had broken down race prejudice. Misery loves company — in its desperation almost any company! Leprous Jews had dealings with leprous Samaritans.

Ten of them — and all lepers! It was a gruesome sight. Lepers are loathsome to the eyes. They are compelled by law to shout at the approach of any one, "Unclean, unclean!" Eye and ear and sense of smell are all offended in their approach — and no one would touch them. No one save the One who showed himself the friend of the friendless, the friend of publicans and sinners, the friend of heretics and of lepers! It is recorded by Luke (who as a

physician felt the full force of it) that "Jesus put forth his hand and touched a leper saying, Be thou clean." The men who saw it never forgot the thrill which went through them when they saw the clean hand of health touch the foul body of disease. They caused it to be written for our instruction.

Jesus felt the same intelligent, sympathetic interest in disease that a physician feels. He did not go about shrinking and shuddering in the presence of human need — he stretched out his hand to help. "The whole," as they proudly called themselves not knowing their own needs, had less interest for him than the sick. He came not to call "the righteous," but sinners to newness of life. He was a Good Shepherd, and he counted it an honor that "he was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He was neither frightened nor repelled by lepers.

The lepers "stood afar off" as they were compelled to do by law. They consequently "lifted up their voices" to make their piteous appeal heard. "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Their forlorn and friendless condition, the despair written on their faces, the deep gulf which their malady had dug between them and all they held dear, would plead like angels with him who came to make men whole.

"When he saw them he said, Go show yourselves to the priests." His words mean little to us until they are interpreted, but they were like an Emancipation Proclamation to those slaves of disease. In that old theocracy, the priests served as a Board of Health. They laid the ban and posted the notices touching cases of contagious disease. They were empowered to issue certificates indicating that the quarantine had been lifted.

"Go show yourselves to the priests!" It was like a bugle note summoning the poor lepers to a feast of hope.

Go and get your clean bill of health! Go and have yourselves officially registered and certified as healthy men!

What a word to fall upon their ears! Away they went, for he spoke as one having authority! Tainted they were from head to foot, but in high confidence they leaped to the task of securing those certificates which would pronounce them well. The drowning man catches at a straw and the ten lepers in their desperation were ready to act instantly upon the word of sympathy, of kindliness and of hope which fell from the lips of this Friend of need.

"And it came to pass, as they went they were cleansed." As they obeyed, the blessing came. The cure did not come at the word of Christ before they started to show themselves to the priests. The cure did not come at the moment when they were to claim from the hands of those officials the bill of health. It came somewhere along the road. "As they went, they were cleansed."

This is the common method. The young Christian stands up with some misgivings to confess Christ and unite with the Church. During the early months of that profession of faith he walks with hesitation in the way of service. But as he walks he sees what the obedience of faith is accomplishing in his life. The signs of new spiritual vigor appear. Prayer is less a duty and more of a privilege. The work of the Church in Christianizing society shines in his eyes as a splendid opportunity. God's statutes have become his songs. He made his start in faith and he finds himself richly blessed along the way. "Not in the great hour of one's petition, but as he trudges along the dusty road of life the blessing comes" and the load of pain or of sin drops away.

One of the ten "when he saw that he was healed, turned back and fell down at Jesus' feet giving him thanks." Only one out of ten! How sharper than a serpent's tooth

it is! The other nine were more intent upon the bills of health than upon showing their gratitude to the author of their wellbeing.

The nine men could not have been entirely without gratitude — that would make them monsters of wickedness. But they did not give thanks openly and audibly. They may have been singing and making melody in their hearts, but they did not add a single note of praise to the great doxology of thanksgiving rising from a multitude of grateful hearts. They were, like so many worshipers in the modern church, "silent partners" in the work of praise.

God cares for gratitude — and for the open expression of it. Every one cares! When the slightest courtesy is shown a woman, if she be also a lady, she will instantly acknowledge it by her "Thank you." Where the service rendered is greater, the gratitude felt and expressed will be correspondingly great.

The Master expected gratitude. He was hurt by the absence of any open expression of it. "Where are the nine?" he asked. Where indeed! They had been blessed unspeakably and they had not the decency to come back and say "Thank you." The Master repeatedly showed his interest in good manners. He rebuked Simon the Pharisee for his boorishness when he omitted the common courtesies after he had asked Jesus to eat meat with him. He told the disciples to shake the dust off their feet in leaving a city which had insolently refused their message — they were to assert and maintain the dignity of their calling. Here he censures the ill-bred men who failed to express their appreciation of favors received. "Where are the nine?"

One came back to give thanks, "and *he* was a *Samaritan*." The only one who showed his gratitude was a heretic. The Master praised him and gave him an added

blessing. " Go thy way — thy faith hath made thee whole." The grateful man bore with him in his heart a further certification to his wellbeing, spiritual as well as physical, which the titled priests would have been powerless to bestow.

" And he was a Samaritan! " How readily the eyes of the Master looked across the little fences of sectarian prejudice which small men build to shut them off from their fellows! His banner man in humane service was a " good Samaritan." He stood for an hour at a public well imparting some of the noblest truths he uttered to a somewhat disreputable " woman of Samaria." He said openly that there were " publicans and harlots " who having made an about face had brighter spiritual prospects than those who counted themselves the successors of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

When we open the heart in giving thanks for blessings received, we offer the Lord an opportunity to let fall another blessing into our lives. And it always comes! The open door of a grateful heart invites an endless procession of divine blessings.

May not the thankless habit and the lack of readiness to express in devoted service our gratitude to God for signal blessings explain why there are not more answers to our appeals? Ten men cry, " Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Then with the warm results of his answering mercy coursing through their veins nine of the ten crowd ahead into the thick of human activity forgetting to give thanks and glorify God by newness of life.

Where are those nine men who on their sick beds vowed that if God would spare their lives, they would give themselves to Christian service? Where are the nine hundred in every community who enjoy the benefits of having Christian churches open and active, share in the moral

atmosphere those churches help to create, rejoice in the humane and charitable work they do, profit by the stability and protection they afford to all commercial and social interests, yet fail to glorify the God of those churches by honest, consistent membership in some one of them? Where are the nine thousand who live under the stimulus and culture of a Christian civilization, in constant indebtedness to the colleges, paintings, music and literature inspired and wrought out by the force of Christian motive, yet fail to give Christ, the Master and Leader in all these benefits, the gratitude of a devoted life?

BOOK III

THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

XLIX

THE PARABLE OF THE SOIL

Mark 4 : 1-20

We call it oftentimes "the parable of the Sower," but the attention is concentrated not upon the action of the sower but upon the varying reactions secured from the soil where the seed fell. The same good seed fell from the hand of the same faithful sower, but because some fell here and some there, the outcome varied. It would be more fitting then to call it frankly "the parable of the soil."

The passage indicates on the face of it and in the interpretation given it a moment later by the Master himself the diverse results secured where divine agencies acted upon diverse conditions of mind and heart. Here no result was secured; there a result temporary; further on a result promising at first but defeated by adverse influence; and even where conditions favored, the result varied in genuine fruitfulness, yielding sometimes thirty, sometimes sixty, now and then a hundredfold.

The parable shows how the results achieved by the truth and grace of God as they fall upon the hearts of men are affected by the conditions they find awaiting their action. It is a parable of environment, showing how outward conditions count for or against the action of even so potent an influence as "the Word." May we not give the parable an even wider application and think of it as the great parable of environment?

Jesus was not a teacher of sociology — he was a teacher of religion. But he was too wise to ignore the influence of

environment. He knew that where the environment of any life is hard or thin or overcrowded with hostile influences, the product of the life cast into such a situation must be in some measure influenced.

"Whenever Jesus spoke he found four kinds of hearers — the stolid hearer, the sentimental hearer, the sordid hearer, the sincere hearer." In "the stolid man" the soil was hard; in "the sentimental man" it was shallow; in "the sordid man" it was overgrown with the cares of this world; and in "the sincere man" it was good enough to insure a harvest.

In all our work we find in corresponding fashion the four kinds of environment conditioning the response to be secured. We have first the hard environment. There may be in such a situation an abundance of genuine worth but it offers no openings to the approaching life enabling it to gain what it needs. The trodden path across the field has untold depths of fertile soil beneath it perchance, but the seed cast on that hard spot finds that fertility crusted over with an unresponsive surface rendering it of no avail.

The place of toil where honest wages are paid, reasonable hours observed, sanitary conditions maintained but with no sense of pride or joy on the part of the workers in their work, with no clear chance of zest and relish in the associated effort, with no spirit of kindly good will finding expression in the organization of that industry, becomes an economic environment unrewarding in the higher values. The soil is reliable in quality — it would make a good showing under physical analysis — but it is hard.

The home where the steady generosity of the father and the wise management of the mother provide every physical comfort and all the needed facilities for mental growth may be lacking in sympathy, in the fine sense of comrade-

ship, in the good cheer and spontaneity which belong to home life at its best. It then becomes a disappointing environment. The texture of this setting for the life may be as worthy, as beautiful, as polished and as unresponsive as mahogany. The very elegance of an unsympathetic environment "takes away" the finer impulse and "it becomes unfruitful."

Here also was the soil of life which is thin and shallow. It was not hard like a concrete pavement where no sort of seed would have a chance to grow. It was only too inviting and receptive. But it was superficial; it had no reserve power; it had no deeper resource upon which to draw; its possibilities therefore were quickly enjoyed to the full and as quickly exhausted.

There are stores which put all their fine goods in the front window — they are only four feet deep. When a customer goes to the counter to make purchases it is a disappointing quest. The store has no reserve power, no hidden resources to be developed and revealed. It may interest the careless passer-by "for a time," but his interest soon "withers away."

There are situations into which the life may be cast which at once offer a superficial form of satisfaction. But the advantages are all on the surface. It is impossible for a sturdy life to take deep root or to draw upon resources of help which will endure. It is an environment which responds to the approach of life quickly, and as quickly confesses its exhaustion. The scorching rays of a hot sun or the opposing influences of tribulation or persecution cause the life fed upon this meager source of supply to fail. It has not "the depth of earth" needed to offer facilities for that deep-rooted life which shall become like a tree planted by the river of water bringing forth fruit in its season and leaves that never wither.

There are other forms of environment which are already overcrowded with useless and noxious growths. The soil is rich and deep — if it were only clean it would offer a splendid opportunity for a fruitful life. But the seeds of evil have been sown in it. The tares and the thorns have pre-empted the best of the fertile forces and the life cast there is robbed of its chance.

What a picture of the modern city! The forms of external stimulus are innumerable; the forces which act upon the life of the individual powerful; the depth of resource which comes by the massing of energy in this highly complex life seems all but inexhaustible; the chance for social contact is bewildering in its richness; the ministry of dramatic presentation, of beauty, of melody and harmony is steady and abundant. The kings of the earth bring their glory and their honor into the city whose walls are great and high.

But for thousands of city dwellers " the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things " choke the life and it becomes unfruitful. In this rich soil debasing forms of social contact, degrading forms of art and dramatic appeal, the ruthless beat of economic forces, the corrupting and the maddening appeal of showy luxury, all register upon the weaker lives cast there an impress which makes powerfully against a satisfying harvest of moral results. The soil is thick, deep, black loam, but the thorns and the briars which it sustains war against the finest of the wheat. The real harvest fails for lack of room.

The scramble of competing interests in the overcrowded environment becomes as deadly to the best results as the meagerness of the soil which is too thin. There are souls in all our cities going down in defeat under this pressure. They meant to be thoughtful, unselfish and devout, but

somehow they did not seem to find time and place for the quiet cultivation of these enduring values. The world was too much with them soon and late, and the final yield became a bitter and lasting disappointment.

But there are lives which in wholesome environments find themselves as seed cast into good ground — "they bring forth fruit," some thirtyfold, some sixty and some a hundred. The story of the reaction here is one of a mounting success as the varying vigor of each life secures from the friendly and co-operating forces into which it is cast its own proportionate response. Here the seed has the soil to itself unhindered by an overmastering opposition and it grows to splendid maturity.

The seed cast into good ground found its own life principle in active, promising co-operation with those universal forces, the warmth of the sun, the quickening influence of rain and dew, the germinating energy of the soil itself, and by this aggregation of energy the rich harvest was won.

The life of a man cast into a fitting environment, on a college campus, in some place of employ where other books are kept beside the cash-book showing entries of higher values, in some home where sympathetic understanding and loyal affection bear rule, in some community of friendly neighbors, in a church set for the worship of the Father and the nurture of his children, finds itself speedily taken up into the grasp of forces beneficent and dynamic beyond all estimate. And because the conditions of a harvest have been rightly met God gives the increase of all those qualities which feed and gladden the needy life of the race.

The confidence of the individual or of society in the power of personal initiative and in the strength of human will need not blind us to the potent influence of environment. It is the business of society by wise sanitation, by abundant facilities for education, by competent and effec-

tive legislation to make the environment of every life as favorable as may be. The fate of the seed in this passage as determined by the soil where it fell prefigures the fate of the soul which suffers defeat where the soil is hard or thin or crowded with evil growths. Let the soil be made deep and rich and clean, so far as human energy and ingenuity may effect that end! Then each life will have its clear chance for growth and fruitfulness.

In these days of social surveys, of weighty emphasis upon "conditions," of studied insistence upon "the economic interpretation of history," we are not in danger of forgetting the truth of this parable. The power of the soil does not exhaust the account of determining influences — even the Son of Man who taught as never man taught did not undertake to say everything at once. We find that He at once set alongside this parable of environment another parable supplementing the teaching. When we turn the leaf we find the story of "The Wheat and the Tares." But a mighty truth is here contained, a truth which those who most exalt the power of personal regeneration must ever bear in mind.

L

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

Matt. 13 : 24-30; 36-43

The Master was no impossible idealist. He lived with his head among the stars but his feet were placed on the solid earth. He was initiating a world-wide, enduring religious movement and he could not set the standards low. They must be exacting and, for years to come, out of reach in order to be effective. The aspirations of men must be made to say, " It is high — we cannot attain unto it."

But he understood also that he must build his Kingdom out of human beings, not out of angels. He must commit the keeping of the movement into the hands of flesh and blood. The very enlistment of followers with their inevitable limitations would involve the use of much material which would not be ideal. He wisely prepared us for all this in such passages as the one before us.

You may sow the good seed of Christian truth with all care and zeal but the soil is such that three-fourths of it may fail by reason of the hardness, the shallowness, the preoccupation it encounters. You may sow the best seed to be had in good soil, but while you are enjoying your innocent sleep the enemy may come and sow tares. You find when you awake, to your consternation and disappointment, that the crop will be mixed. You may cast your net ever so wisely into the sea and draw it with a steady hand, but even so, the net will enclose and retain the noxious and useless along with the good and wholesome fish.

The great moral movements of history show this mingling of varied elements. Marcus Aurelius was one of the purest of men, leaving utterances which the world gratefully prints with its classics, yet he persecuted the Christians more relentlessly than did the wicked Nero. John Calvin left a profound impress for good upon his age, yet he burned Servetus. George Washington was the worthy and beloved Father of his country, yet he kept slaves. The Puritans of New England made a magnificent contribution to the growth of civil liberty, to the cause of education and to the advance of the Kingdom of God, but they harried the life out of old women whom they regarded as witches.

Turn where you will, there are knots in the log! It will not split just straight. The Master said that the sacred efficiency of our best forces would be hindered by these admixtures of evil. If men are to raise wheat at all they must do it in fields where weeds grow. If they are to fish with nets the sculpin and the dogfish will come along with the haddock and the bluefish. The Kingdom of Heaven is like that, Jesus said — the very agencies which God has raised up for the world's redemption are modified by the presence of hurtful elements mingled with the good.

This parable of the wheat and the tares does not encourage complacency in the presence of evil. The man might be compelled to sow his seed in a field where tares would grow but he could go to his work with clean hands and a pure heart carrying nothing but good seed. He might be compelled to unite with an imperfect church — there is no other sort, and a dull tool is better than none — but he could at least strive to raise the average of right living in that group. The willingness to let tares grow with the wheat did not spring from any leniency toward noxious

weeds — they simply could not be rooted out as yet without imperiling the life of the wheat.

We have here offered us no final solution of the problem of evil. The questions of speculative philosophy did not come in for direct and systematic treatment from Christ. But he differentiated the evil sharply from the good. It was not "good in the making"; it was no part of the original endowment of human nature as it lay in the divine purpose. "An enemy hath done this." The task of winning personal character and of building the perfect order must be carried forward in the face of opposition. How we shall picture "the enemy," with or without horns and hoofs; how we shall give him philosophical standing within our metaphysics, is a problem left to the individual thinker to wrestle with as best he may.

The tares and the wheat grew in the same place, utilizing the same benign influences, the warmth of the sun, the moisture of rain and dew and the fertility of the soil, to produce results here useful and there hurtful. The love of money is a root of all manner of evil, but it also awakens some of the most wholesome and honorable ambitions known. The mysterious attraction which one sex has for the other leads to the foulest vices and crimes and it also lies at the foundation of the fairest institution we possess. Where the soil is rich the growth will be abundant — whether it be full of worth or full of hurt depends upon the quality of the life principle.

The wheat and the tares looked alike as they grew together, and for a time equally attractive. If evil were always foul and hideous in its aspect it would be more easily detected and refused. But the tares are not always "monsters of such frightful mien as to be hated need but to be seen." They come often in such fair form that we first admire and then desire and then embrace.

"The woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes." There was no handsomer tree in the garden. It is both inexpedient and inaccurate always to picture sin as loathsome and repellent—evil owes its power to the fact that in its springtime and in ours it may seem as fair as some rightful element in life. "All sins have blue eyes and dimples when they are young." We wait for the advancing season and the approach of harvest to detect the essential difference between the wheat worthy of the garner and the worthless darnel destined for the burning.

"The field is the world," Jesus said. The place where the good seed of religious truth is to be put down beneath the surface and made to grow is not some holy corner in this life of ours fenced off and walled in from the rest of this common earth. The tired life of the race may enter such a place of privilege to renew its strength, washing itself clean in a baptism of divine help and feeding upon that nourishment which issues from the Unseen, but it lives its real life out in the open. The world where men buy and sell, employ and are employed, struggle, sin, suffer and die, this is the sphere of action for real religion. "The field is the world," for this wider range of human interest is the only area which can furnish adequate material for that full development of the type of religious growth the Master had in mind. And in this vast complexity of interest and action the good and the bad elements are mingled in a bewildering confusion.

"Let both grow together until the harvest!" It is impossible either by rigorous ecclesiastical discipline or by drastic legal reforms to purge the church and the state of those hindering and hurtful growths which militate against an abundant harvest. Let both grow together not because we are indifferent to the evil growth but because the instant

destruction of it would imperil valued interests. The firebrands more intent on burning the tares before the hour has come for that judgment than upon raising wheat become themselves the enemies of the harvest. The odium of carrying a certain measure of unsound teaching in the church or a certain measure of unconsecrated adherents or even the burden of unworthy practice on the part of some is an evil less serious than would be the loss which would result from an effort to immediately cast out all that is unworthy. Let both grow — there is a wise patience which is both humane and statesmanlike.

But this entanglement of good and evil is not to be permanent. The day of separation which God has within his own power and purpose is on the way. In the consummation of the age the things which offend shall be removed. "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels and they shall gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity and shall cast them into a furnace of fire." However we may indicate our understanding of the moral equivalents of the various items in this pictured program, it would seem as easy to make black seem white or white black, as to intimate that the Master meant something other than a most somber fate for evil. He warns us against that persistence in evil which may pass beyond remedy.

The final separation would be effected "by angels," by superhuman agencies. The absolute ideal is not to be attained by us in our present stage of development. The Master has here given us no hard and fast method of church discipline and no definite program for political action in the treatment of offenders. He has sought rather to inculcate that wise spirit of patience which holds itself unwilling to imperil valued interests by its fierce onslaughts upon the evil which has become entangled with the good.

The main lessons of the parable then are these: the inevitable mingling of varied qualities in those agencies which make for betterment; the ineradicable distinction to be kept clear between the good and the evil; the utter abhorrence of evil in one's heart or in the world, unmodified by any sort of complacency, as being the work of "an enemy"; the necessity for wise and discriminating patience in waiting for the elimination of the evil that the very life of the organism on which it has fastened may not be imperiled; and the habit of cordial appreciation which constantly regards the growth of the good as being the significant fact in the field, yielding that healthy optimism which serves as the herald of a gracious harvest.

Alas for those who can see the tares in the wheat field and not see the wheat! There are mudholes in Yosemite Valley and there are rattlesnakes and skunks. But in the presence of El Capitan and Vernal Falls the healthy mind does not dwell upon the disagreeable and the unsavory. It is a small nature which habitually bestows its interest and remark upon the present defects in the process, never catching the vision of that great consummation toward which the moral order moves.

LI

THE WORTH OF THE KINGDOM

Matt. 13 : 44-53

We find these parables of the Kingdom coming in pairs. They are rights and lefts, fitting neatly upon a common body of truth. They supplement each other in the varying accent given to particular aspects of the truth.

The wise teacher treats his utterance as sailors treat their boats. He makes his presentation trim by loading it on both sides. The single strong statement standing out of all relation to cognate truths becomes oftentimes dangerous and misleading. The crank, the bigot or the fanatic is developed by having one tremendous truth plumped on one side of his little craft. He is not properly stocked and balanced; he is not rounded out by other truths, and the one big idea he carries capsizes him. The parallelism and the antithesis of scripture, the whole habit of supplementing the one idea by its mate adds to the impressiveness and to the effectiveness of the truth thus presented.

Here in this single chapter we have three such pairs of parables. In the parable of the soil, the diligent effort of the same sower of the same good seed achieves varying results because of the varying character of the soil, hard, shallow, weedy or promising. This brings out the power of environment as it registers its effect upon the best of efforts. Then the story of the tares, the parable of the life principle, where two life qualities were cast into the same soil with varying results, balances the former by

indicating the vital importance of the inner life quality in determining the harvest.

The grain of mustard seed growing into a splendid plant, with roots, branches, leaves, all organized into a common life, indicates the progress achieved by those visible, tangible efforts put forth in organized fashion for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. Then to supplement that teaching in the minds of those who look too much on the outward appearance and not enough on the subtle forces at work beneath the surface, the parable of the leaven brings out in bold relief the mighty influence of those silent, permeative energies which work by spiritual contagion to the same high end.

Here in this story of the pearl of great price we find a merchantman whose business it was to buy and sell pearls. He found in the regular employ of his trade and in the terms of his own daily pursuits that which had supreme worth warranting him in making a total investment of his ability and resource in order to possess himself of it. He represents the men who in the immediate line of their employment come upon those spiritual values which stand supreme. They are able to construe in terms of that which is altogether common and familiar that quality of character here symbolized by the pearl of great price.

But in view of the fact that not all the toilers of earth are so happily situated, Jesus portrayed the finding of that supreme value in life by another picture. There was a man who found his treasure hidden in a field where the sheep were grazing, the poppies were in bloom and the children were at play. This was not in the line of his usual employment or interest — it was indeed a "find." But it likewise represented to him the highest value in life and he sold all that he had and invested it in that field that he might possess the treasure. That quality of

life which holds such worth as to warrant the investment of one's total energy may not lie for every man immediately in the line of his customary activity.

We are grateful to the Master for hanging here on a single wall this series of companion pictures affording to our minds a more just and adequate conception of the Kingdom he came to establish in the hearts, in the organized relationships and in the institutions of men. The Kingdom of God includes that whole section and quality of life which owns and obeys the rule of the divine spirit. It is to be found in all those principles and aspirations which rule the hearts of individual men becoming determinative in their daily conduct. It is to be found in the prevalence and sovereignty of a certain spirit and method in those forms of social, political, industrial organization which bear directly upon the formation of character. It is to be found in the steady influence of those enduring institutions which serve to express and to develop the corporate life of society so that all the varying kingdoms of interest shall be in process of becoming kingdoms of the divine purpose as revealed in the Lord Christ.

The soil and the seed are both to be regarded in anticipating a harvest. The houses men live in, the shops they work in, the streets their children play in, the facilities for cleanliness, for privacy, for happiness, none of these can be left out of the account in making a forecast of human well-being.

But the seed also has a way of asserting its mastery over surroundings apparently untoward. The tare achieves nothing good in the best of soil. The evil-minded man goes anywhere and everywhere finding that which ministers to the evil in his nature. The pure mind and unselfish heart sent by some noble impulse into the slums secure a reaction from those conditions which hastens rather than

retards the growth of moral excellence. Men instructed in the Kingdom of God do not speak slightingly of either the seed or the soil; they have regard both to favoring environment and to right purpose.

The strongly organized and the subtly pervasive forms of effort and influence divide the honors. The Kingdom of Heaven does come by observation where wise means are skillfully adapted to secure right ends. We are urged to be as wise as the children of this world in shaping our activities in such fashion as to compass results. But the kingdom within us and around us comes also by those unobserved agencies which work under cover — as the leaven worked. They are never tabulated in any kind of report but they will come in for recognition in the great day when many an amazed man will be saying, "Lord, when?" We are not to ignore the mission of those myriad forms of spiritual contagion which work night and day while men sleep and rise, making ceaselessly for the great fulfillment.

The direct search for the supreme values in life in one's own line of effort and on the other hand the inadvertent finding of that which shines with such radiance as to lay its requisition upon all our further endeavors — both these have place when we plan for the appeal of the truth and for the enlistment of others in the quest of life abounding and unending.

The hour cometh and now is when all that any man is worth is the good he has done and the character he has won. The character and the service of the individual life are for each soul the treasure hid in the field and the pearl of great price. It matters not what Bradstreet says; it matters not what the headlines in the newspapers may announce; it matters not though the Chamber of Commerce may adjourn for an hour and the flags fly at half-

mast on all the public buildings — all the man is worth is the good he has done and the character he has won. Therefore do good and give alms. Provide bags which wax not old. Lay up treasures which fail not.

The treasure and the pearl both proclaim the fact then that every man's supreme concern is the quality of life which may be secured. What each man makes out of his field of effort is important. But what the field makes out of him, as he buys and sells, or heals or pleads, or teaches or preaches, is a thousand times more important.

"Covet earnestly the best!" It lies below the surface, even as the hid treasure was deep buried underneath the smooth slope where the grass grew and the cattle grazed. If you would possess the values which are supreme you will need to touch life at its deeper levels, uncovering those profounder sources of motive, stimulus and spiritual supply. The hid treasure of the soul is only available for those who are willing to dig deep and invest their all.

There is only one possession in this world where a man's tenure is absolutely sure — no man is ever compelled to part with himself. If he gives his best strength to the accumulation of an abundance of things, he may hear the summons at any moment, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee — then whose shall those things be?" Whose indeed! In that hour he has nothing to take with him but his own qualities of mind and heart, his own accumulation of character and his own record of Christian service. And that fact becomes either his highest reward or his sorest penalty, for no man can be good company for himself permanently unless he is a Christian. He needs the peace and the promise of Christian faith.

"Judas went out and it was night." From that hour of guilty treachery it was always night when Judas went out — no matter where he went — for Judas. It is gruesome

to have a traitor around — and in every room or group that Judas entered there was a traitor present. When he died he left his thirty pieces of silver and all that he had, but he took Judas, the traitor, with him. The tenure of things is uncertain but the tenure of self is sure. It is therefore the part of wisdom to invest all that one has in securing that selfhood here symbolized by the treasure and the pearl.

"Have ye understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "They said to him, Yea, Lord." How he must have smiled, inwardly if not outwardly, at their simplicity! They had learned the alphabet and were beginning to pronounce words of one syllable in the language of the Kingdom. But the deeper meaning and the richer content of that life abundant and eternal to which he would introduce them lay ahead as an undiscovered country. They had need of further instruction in the methods of the Kingdom that as well-to-do householders they might bring forth from its treasury things new and old.

LII

THE HEARER AND THE DOER

Luke 6 : 39-49

"And he spake a parable unto them" — in fact, four brief parables within the limits of this brief passage. The blind leading the blind — a lesson on leadership! The splinter and the beam — a lesson on self-examination! The good and the bad tree — a lesson on the organic relation between the inner life and outward conduct! The wise and the foolish builders — a lesson on the necessity of founding the life on obedience to the divine will!

"Can the blind lead the blind?" They can and they do. We see full-page, life-size illustrations of it every day in the week. And we also see in the "pit" — as the Revised Version more accurately has it, for Palestine abounded in wells without curbs, in unfenced quarries and in various kinds of "pits" — the outcome of the experiment.

It will be a great gain when we recognize the fact that no man has a right to lead until he knows his way about. No man has a right to urge his opinions upon others until he has made an honest study of the subject. The blundering work of amateurs and smatterers helps to fill many a "pit" with human wreckage. Men with heads on their shoulders are demanding the verdict of expert knowledge. The committing of valued interests to sound knowledge and trained efficiency would seem to be a commonplace of prudence. It is a question whether the hasty judgment or quick resentment of the crowd should be made a court of

immediate and final appeal for carefully reasoned verdicts brought in by men to whom the adjudication of difficult questions is a life calling. The "blind" may feel abundantly able to "lead" and the "pit" may declare the results of their self-confidence.

The special reference of the Master was to moral blindness. He found patent and laughable evidence of this obtuseness in the moral immodesty of those who stood ever ready to indicate the splinterlike faults in their fellows while great beams of moral deficiency marred their own natures. "How canst thou say, 'Brother, let me pull out the mote from thine eye' while thou beholdest not the beam in thine own eye?" The "smug complacency" was so ludicrous as to elicit this extravagant picture of "splinter and beam" from the lips of Christ.

The rôle of "the superior person" forever bent upon bringing home to others the sense of their moral lack is hard. His very absorption in the multitudinous faults which he detects in others robs him of the needed time and strength to make similar scrutiny of his own limitations. The two imperative needs in his case are these: self-examination — "Behold what is in thine own eye"; and self-reform — "Cast out the beam in thine own eye, then thou shalt see clearly." These wholesome admonitions follow naturally upon the preceding verses. Before we undertake to "judge" or "condemn" others we must strictly judge ourselves or we shall be found indeed "blind leaders of the blind."

The Master then indicated the necessary and organic relation between the inner life principle and its outward manifestation in conduct. The good tree brings forth good fruit, the evil tree bears evil fruit — in both cases, like Luther, "It cannot otherwise." The dependence of wholesome moral influence upon a right life within is absolute.

Spiritual efficacy is no trick to be learned by the clever; it is not a question of a more perfect technique. The futility of expecting figs from thorns or grapes from thistles is not more evident than the futility of hoping for spiritual usefulness from an unrenewed, disobedient life.

"What you are talks so much louder than what you say that my mind is confused," was the bitter answer given by honest intelligence to officious insincerity. Heart and mouth must have a common life principle if anything of worth is to issue, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Then the folly of pious utterance unattended by the plain habit of moral obedience comes in for rebuke. "Why call ye me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things which I say?" Why indeed! What shall it profit though a man gracefully and habitually utters all the litanies of earth if these worshipful words are not accompanied by an unwearying effort to bring the practice of his life into agreement with the uttered aspiration.

Jesus likened the man of obedient habit to one who in building his house dug deep and laid the foundation on a rock. And when the hard tests came, the rain and the wind, the stream and the flood beating upon the house, it stood because it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not shall be likened unto a *dizzy* man" — to employ the quaint, suggestive translation given the word in Wyckliffe's Bible — "who built his house upon the sand." The light-headed, staggering uncertainty of the life grounded in disregard for the word of Christ could not be better indicated. When the hard tests come to such a life it falls for lack of adequate support.

The Spreckels Building on Market Street, San Francisco, is eighteen stories high. It is a tall, slender, towerlike

structure, square in form and apparently without sufficient base for a building of such height. When the great earthquake of 1906 occurred and the whole surface of the earth along the line of the "Portola Fault" was in a tremor, it was estimated by scientific men that the swaying of the tall Spreckels Building carried the center of gravity beyond the base line many times during those fearful forty-eight seconds.

But when the building was erected the wise builder "dug deep and laid the foundations" aright. The building has a steel frame and the frame does not rest upon the loose sand which underlies so much of San Francisco—the architect pierced through the loose material at the surface and anchored the steel frame in great wells blasted from the solid rock and afterward filled in around the bases of the steel frame with cement. When the eighteenth of April came, testing every man's work of what sort it was, the huge weight of the swaying building was held in place because it was founded upon a rock. It had gripped that which was abiding.

The hard tests come to every life. The elemental forces of human experience, the wind and the rain, the stream and the flood, threaten the life structure of each one of us. The various temptations, subtle and powerful, the heavy burdens of responsibility which cause men to stagger, the bitter disappointments which beat upon the dearest purposes we cherish, the shock of adversity or of bereavement which causes the very foundations of our hope to tremble, all these experiences come steadily to the children of men. And the tested lives stand or fall as they have or have not been grounded in obedience to principle, as they have or have not come to grip the fundamental realities.

In telling fashion Jesus passes in review these incompetent and untrustworthy guides. The would-be leaders

blinded by their own conceit, like the Pharisees, the leaders blinded by their unbelief, like the Sadducees, the leaders blinded by beams of moral fault in their own lives, and the leaders blinded by their habit of disobedience are all indicated and the disciples are warned against the evil results which such incompetence entails.

The imperative need of speedily and steadily translating "hearing" into "doing" can scarcely be overstated. "After *he* had seen the vision, immediately *we* endeavored to go." One man, the most conspicuous and forceful man of his generation in moral influence, saw a vision and immediately a group of devoted men set forth with him along the line of achievement. The eyes of insight saw certain ends as desirable. Obedient feet began at once to tread the path of fulfillment and obedient hands were busied with the task of realizing that splendid hope.

"If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them." The highest happiness comes not by what we hear or see or feel — it comes by what we do. What shall it profit a man though he hear great music and read great books and have his soul stirred by the appeal of some prophet of the living God, unless as a result of it all he goes out and does something. If you hear and feel and see, happy are ye if ye do, and only then.

"The criticism of the next generation upon this," some wise man has said, "will be, 'How plainly they saw their problems, how ineffective they were in solving them.'" The arraignment is too sweeping, yet in many quarters the eyes see and the ears hear but the feet and the hands are not ready to go in the way of achievement.

Jacob Riis shows us "How the Other Half Lives," but thousands of the more fortunate decline the huge task of helping to change the hard lot of their unhappy fellows. Booker Washington in "Up from Slavery" shows us a

vision of a backward race ennobled by training, but thousands of white men forget to lend a hand. John Spargo utters "The Cry of the Children," for there are two millions of them under sixteen years of age working at gainful occupations in our own land according to the government census, but the lack of resolute action to stop this physical, mental and moral depletion of the immature is disgraceful. Lincoln Steffens shows up "The Shame of the Cities" and it brings a blush to the face of many a patriot, but when the task of removing that shame begins to make demands upon the time and strength men are giving to their private business, there are many whose love for civic righteousness waxes cold.

What are lessons and visions for but to be speedily translated into deeds! Hearing and seeing and feeling which find no expression in action become a kind of mental and spiritual dissipation no more honorable than physical dissipation through the use of stimulants or opiates. The great truth yields its value only as it finds utterance in terms of life. "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

LIII

THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM

Mark 4 : 26-32

The Kingdom of God grows steadily because it has behind it the push of universal and invincible forces. It is "as if a man should cast seed into the ground and should sleep and rise night and day and the seed should spring and grow up, he knows not how." The whole process was clothed in mystery for the man who by his own act had seemed to set in motion these mighty energies. And the harvest came on apace with a kind of inevitableness because of the movement of these unseen forces with which he had allied his effort.

The naturalness of the religious life and the sure prevalence of that life quality which is to be the ultimate answer to the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," are here portrayed. "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself" — she cannot otherwise. It is a case of mistaken emphasis when the strangeness of the religious life is urged. The idea of "a peculiar people" has been overworked and distorted — the Revised Version has it "a people for God's own possession." It is the un-Christian life which is odd and strange. When a man "comes to himself" he comes to the Father. The more normal the life becomes the more truly Christian it is.

This parable beyond all others perhaps proclaims the fundamental adaptation of the truth of God to the spirit of man. The adaptation of seed to soil and of soil to seed was such that when once they were brought together, men

might sleep and rise, leaving this conjunction of forces without further effort of their own, and inevitably there would come forth first the blade, then the ear, then the full-fledged grain. The thrust of an Infinite Purpose made sure the final result.

"The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself" — *automate* was the word of the Master. He saw the progress of the Kingdom proceeding automatically when once the truth should have been genuinely lodged in the mind and heart of the race. While men slept and rose and slept again to ease them from their toil these unseen spiritual energies would be ceaselessly at work bringing nearer the harvest. The well-designed and benign acts of men would be taken up and utilized by the great moral order which enfolded them. The direct efforts of men become enlisted with a mighty system of energies which are the widely spreading branches of that true vine of divine life.

What a reassuring thought to those who engage in spiritual effort and become disheartened oftentimes when they look for results! The utterance of some vital truth from the pulpit or in a classroom on Sunday seems to issue in no immediate visible result. But the new idea once implanted, the new impulse once awakened, the new resolve quickened for the moment into action, is taken up and conserved by the same sort of invisible and invincible forces as those which met the seed as it fell into the soil. And then as the minister and the teacher sleep and rise quite unaware of what is in process beneath the surface where their eyes do not reach, the realm of human nature is bringing along results of itself. When our visible efforts have ceased and our spoken words have been hushed, unseen energies are still at work in which we may safely confide.

The self-activity of the soil typifies "that Power not our-

selves which makes for righteousness." It typifies also that resident hunger of the soul, and its perennial thirst for the living God — he has made us for himself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in him. In all our efforts we may depend upon these two allies, the underlying good will of the Infinite and the essential adaptation of the human heart to the message of the gospel.

When some pious visitor at the White House in the darker days of the Civil War expressed to the President the hope that God was on their side, Lincoln replied gravely, "I am more concerned about our being on God's side." When men and women in their dominant purposes, in their prevailing moods and dispositions, in those aspirations which have the right of way, undertake to place themselves in line with the divine purpose, they may share in the serenity of the farmer who sleeps and rises in the sure certainty that having cast his seed into the soil, he has initiated a process which will work steadily and mightily in his interest.

The growth of the Kingdom is an orderly procedure according to the teaching of this passage. It does not come mainly by cataclysms. It is an evolution rather than a revolution. The blade is put forth and then at a later stage the earing is seen and late in the season the full grain appears. The stirring programs put forward in the Millerite excitement in 1843 or by "Pastor Russell" in his pictures of the "Millennial Dawn" may appeal to the uninitiated. But "householders instructed in the Kingdom of God" who know the vital relation between "things new and old," are not misled. When men cry, "Lo, here," or, "Lo, there," their interest goes not forth. They have learned the method of the Master which is the method of the ages.

We do not add cubits to our stature by being anxious

and overwrought for an hour or two. We do not cause the seed to grow by sitting up night and day to give it the added stimulus of feverish effort. The child living out the law of his own being, fulfilling not fretfully but trustfully the purpose of his existence, does add cubits to his stature. And men sleeping and rising in normal fashion await the action of those orderly forces of earth and sky which work their beneficent will upon the seed cast into the ground. The Kingdom comes mainly not by swift and dramatic strokes which lend themselves so readily to observation — it comes by those patient, agelong processes which believing men and women set in motion as they move toward the vast fulfillment of their highest hopes.

The initial impulse may be ever so slight if only it be vital. Bulk does not always count for efficiency. The grain of mustard seed was less than all seeds with which the hearers of the Master were familiar but full grown it became a tree shooting forth great branches in which the fowls of the air might lodge. The word of truth, the act of friendliness, the quiet maintenance of a certain attitude or the unselfish deed of devotion, may seem to be the least of all the influences which bid for the response of some life. The quiet action may not bulk large upon the popular horizon. But when it is sown by the hand of faith, it may serve to usher in a development possessed of large and lasting significance.

Some bit of consecrated effort or material the great order of unseen forces does seem to require. Give it a grain of mustard seed and it will show us a tree. Give it waterpots filled with water to the brim and the wedding will be furnished with wine. Give it that small measure of obedient trust which feels its way along the street that it may wash in the pool of Siloam and the blind eyes will be made to see. Give it the dust of the ground, whatever that may

mean, and the breath of a mighty life will be breathed into it until there issues forth a living soul destined to wear the likeness and image of the Most High. The basis of consecrated resource may be slender but, supplemented by the gracious power which takes it up as the soil took up the mustard seed, the outcome may be glorious beyond estimate.

One of the most effective men in any of the teams engaged in the "Men and Religion Forward Movement" a few years ago related this occurrence in his early life. He was employed as office boy in a large concern. The president of the corporation was commonly referred to by the clerks as "Old Money Bags," as a "Pirate" or a "Shark." The boy had never seen him.

One morning this office boy was sent into the president's private room to kindle a fire. While he was laying the sticks he heard a step behind him and before he had time to look around a cheery voice came: "Good morning! That fire will feel good today. It is chilly! Thank you very much." It was only a mustard seed of kindly interest in the least important of thousands of employés, but it was the inception of a new feeling and attitude. The present proclamation of a social gospel which has to do with the coming of a Kingdom which shall be an everlasting Kingdom might trace its origins back to that simple word of human interest. When the initial impulse is grown, no man can foretell the result! The impatient people who would leap at once to the harvest without passing in regular fashion through the preliminary stages need to read this parable once more.

There is also included in this passage the parable of the leaven. The new life principle once introduced into the measures of meal worked its will upon its neighboring particles. It imparted the same leavening potency to each

adjoining bit of meal so that it in turn worked upon its fellow. And this communication of a new quality was carried forward until the whole was leavened. The leaven stands for that mysterious energy which lifts — the original meaning was "to raise." It lifts the materials of life to a higher level.

How the two parables of the mustard seed and the leaven supplement each other! In the first the tiny seed growing into a splendid plant with roots, trunk, branches and leaves, affording a resting place for the birds, brings out the progress achieved by the visible and organized efforts of men for the advancement of the Kingdom. It was a work seen and tangible where part related itself to part before the eyes of the many, making plain the development from a single seed to this useful and promising growth.

Then lest men might feel that nothing was being accomplished where no such visible organized results were in evidence, Jesus hung before them the picture of the leaven. The yeast hidden by the deft hand of a woman in three measures of meal did its work out of sight in an unorganized way. It illustrated the permeative power of the truth, the results achieved by subtle communication where one soul influences another it scarce knows how.

LIV

THE SIGN AND THE LEAVEN

Mark 8 : 11-26

The Master had crossed the frontier into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. He had also been at work in Decapolis. Now when he returned to his own country " the Pharisees came forth and began to question him, seeking of him a sign from heaven." It was their prevailing mood. They were the carping, hindering, nagging opponents of the will of God. What a rôle for the professed religious leaders of the day to play! What a contrast between the Gentile woman's eager faith and the sour unbelief of these " Masters in Israel."

They demanded " a sign from heaven." In their cavils they attributed the work of Christ in casting out devils to the Prince of devils — they believed that supernatural powers of an evil sort might be at work in the affairs of this world. They therefore demanded this " sign *from heaven* " which should conform to their notions of an unimpeachable testimony to the divine character of Christ's work.

This they said " testing him " — the translation of this word in so many passages as " tempt " is confusing. It would clear up for many minds the meaning of that petition in the Lord's Prayer, " Lead us not into temptation," if the words were understood to mean, " Bring us not into the place of severe testing." It is the voicing of spiritual modesty uncertain of its own strength and shrinking from the strain which might prove its undoing. The

Pharisees demanded this "sign from heaven" that they might subject his claims to a rigid test of their own devising.

The Master "sighed deeply in his spirit." That generation had already a gigantic "sign from heaven" in the fact of the Incarnation. His own matchless life and teaching, his power of moral renewal in the lives of those who companied with him, his message awakening that response in the moral need of the world which became his highest credential — all these were "signs from heaven."

"There shall no sign be given to this generation" — in the parallel passages in Matthew and in Luke these words are added, "but the sign of the prophet Jonah." In this case the sign was internal and spiritual rather than some external wonder. "The men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah" — they made the response which the Pharisees of Christ's time were failing to make though a greater than Jonah voiced the appeal.

Jesus would turn their minds from the external to the internal. They were looking for the "evidences of Christianity" in the wrong quarter. When they cried, "Give us your proofs," "Shew us a sign," their minds were upon that which is altogether secondary. The Master utilized miracles to gain attention, for no teacher can teach unless he has attention. But he speedily sought to lift the interest of his hearers from the outward to the inward manifestations of the divine energy. "This is an evil generation — they seek a sign."

We have made a distinct gain in this matter in the last fifty years. The evidential value of miracles once urged with showy confidence has been remanded to an entirely subordinate place. The evidences of Christianity today which carry most weight with judge and jury are to be found in the higher standard of values consequent upon the

diffusion of the Christian gospel, in the new regard for the weak and helpless, in the more complete sense of responsibility for the general well-being, in the steadier and more thoroughgoing attitude of opposition to all forms of evil, in the larger vision and more profound confidence touching the coming of that condition of life worthy to be designated as " the Kingdom of God." These are indeed " signs from heaven " testifying to the validity of the Christian message in terms of abiding worth.

Jesus left the Pharisees and took a boat for the other side of the lake. The disciples accompanied him, but they forgot to take bread with them. On the way across Jesus said, " Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod." The word " leaven " was used among the Hebrews to designate any pervasive influence, good or bad, but more commonly bad because of the ceremonial prejudice against leaven induced by the ceremonial law. " The leaven of the Pharisee " was that spirit of formalism, pride, carping, hypocrisy which had corrupted the religious life of the nation. " The leaven of Herod " was worldliness. The Herods were professed Jews who reacting from the strictness of the Pharisees into license were importing into Judaism the evils of heathenism.

There are lighthearted and lightheaded worldlings in all our communities who, priding themselves on their detestation of anything Puritanical and pluming themselves on what they regard as their " breadth of view," suffer the loss of all moral passion and spiritual fiber by the inroads of " the leaven of Herod." And standing over against them, in a self-righteous attitude of protest it may be, there are those who by stiff pride in their rigid respectability and in their measured observance of religious rites become morally ineffective through " the leaven of the Pharisees."

The poor disciples, almost as dull as the sign-seekers,

" reasoned " (literally " dialogued," *dielogizonto*) " among themselves, saying, It is because we have brought no bread." Then it became necessary for the Master to open the eyes of their understanding. " Having eyes, see ye not? Having ears, hear ye not? " And recalling to their minds the feeding of the five thousand, he indicated that it was easier for him to provide bread for a hungry multitude than to develop spiritual insight in his own disciples. The external " signs and wonders " were in his evaluation the easier and the lower form of manifestation of his power. Then he explained to his fumbling followers that it was against the teaching, the spirit, the influence of the Pharisees and of the Herodians that he was warning them.

When they came to Bethsaida Jesus healed a blind man. It was an unusual cure in the method pursued. The Master utilized certain physical agencies — " he put spittle on the eyes of the blind man." The cure was gradual — when the man was asked if he saw anything during the process of recovery, he replied, " I see men as trees, walking." He could discern moving objects without distinguishing them. Then Jesus treated him again and he saw clearly.

The use of the spittle, and the laying of his hands upon the sightless eyes (like his looking up to heaven and his word " Ephphatha " in the healing of the deaf man in Decapolis) were designed to awaken and encourage faith. He used the language of signs in making his " suggestions," as modern psychotherapy would say, in order to induce a mental and spiritual condition favorable to a cure. Here, as his custom was, he sought to enlist the personal trust and effort of the life he would serve.

It was an essential part of his mission. He came to open the eyes of the blind not through the fiat of his own beneficent, redemptive will alone but by securing the co-operation

of all the inner powers of the needy life. He comes to open the eyes of many who in their moral blindness cherish the notion that they see perfectly. But their range of vision is so narrowed and hedged by their own lack of the higher powers of perception that the world they inhabit is one of thick darkness.

It is the mind that sees even more than the eyes. I take my dog with me into the Dresden Gallery. He sees all that I see, physically speaking. He probably sees a great deal more, for his eyesight is better than mine — he has never had to succumb to the indignity of glasses. But when we come out after visiting every room, the Sistine Madonna is not in the dog's world. It is in my world. I see it, I feel it, I am inspired by it as I sit here and write. It has been in my world ever since I saw it for the first time twenty odd years ago. But if the dog were to live out his days in the Dresden Gallery the Sistine Madonna would never enter his range of vision.

This blind man at one stage of his recovery saw men as trees walking — he had a blurred, indistinct vision of something but could not distinguish the material from the human. How many men and women about us suffer the same defect! As Dean Hodges cleverly puts it: "A large part of the battle of life has been fought and won when one has learned the difference between a man and a tree. For that is the difference between the great and the small, between mind and matter, between the eternal and the transitory, between earth and heaven. Success begins with a recognition of the values of things."

It is one of the great valid, abiding signs of the coming of the divine life into the world that men and communities which formerly walked in darkness have seen a great light. They possessed only a hazy, uncertain vision of reality from which the supreme and lasting verities were excluded

by their own lack of perceptive power. But now, through the regeneration of their individual hearts, by the clarifying and ennobling of their social ideals, and by the quickening stimulus afforded by contact with the Spirit, they see heaven and they see it open. They see a whole upper realm of values, forces and activities clear and plain. They see the messengers of the Most High coming and going upon a ceaseless and beneficent ministry. Jesus is "the light of the world" and they who follow him shall lack neither eyes nor the medium where eyes are of avail — "they shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life."

LV

THE CHILD IN THE MIDST

Matt. 18 : 1-14

" The nineteenth century will shine in history as a century of discoveries. An English scientist has given us a list of them, but he has omitted the greatest of them all, the discovery of the child. Accurately speaking, we should say the ' rediscovery of the child,' for the child was first discovered eighteen hundred years ago by the Carpenter of Nazareth. In the first century of our era Jesus took a child and set him in the midst and he has done it again in the century just closed. He has set him in the midst of the artists and in increased numbers they have been painting pictures of children. He has set him in the midst of the poets and they have set the movements of the child's life to music. He has set him in the midst of the psychologists and they are studying him furiously. He has set him in the midst of the Church and the greatest work the Church has done in a century has been done among the young."

In these splendid words one of the foremost preachers in America has indicated the center of interest and the line of advance for spiritual effort as his Master indicated it by the significant action narrated in this passage. He took a child for a text and preached a sermon on greatness. He lifted a child in his arms as a living, moving picture of the spirit in which every man must approach the Eternal. " Except ye become as little children " — the filial attitude alone is acceptable when men draw near to him who is

most fitly designated as "The Father." He held aloft a child and asserted that the interests of that little life were so sacred that in the realm of moral values the unseen forces which have to do with the child's well-being stand in the very forefront of the divine interest — "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father."

In all this he exalted the qualities of modesty, simplicity, teachableness in a fashion sorely needed by this strenuous, self-assertive, self-confident age of ours. If we would know the joys and wield the subtler powers which belong to the Kingdom of God on earth, we shall need to reverse many of our methods. We must go to school to the child. A man can be born anew when he is old. It is one of the glories of the gospel that a man become hard, sordid, suspicious of all generous impulse, may find his inner life become again as the soul of a child.

We are giving some of our ripest wisdom and most generous effort in these days to the high task of Christian nurture. The Bible school is no more an unimportant adjunct of the church, subordinate in interest and value to the preaching service for adults — the truer insight into the value of religious education has set it in the very forefront of our attention. It is not the will of the Father that one of these little ones should be hindered or hurt in his spiritual unfolding by incompetent instruction or by blundering attempts to mould his inner life. Woe betide the church which allows the opening mind and the responsive heart to stumble!

The very appointments of the churches are being made with thoughtful regard for the child in the midst. There are two eyes and two ears in a boy's head, but the eyes vote more stock twice over when a directors' meeting is held than do the ears. Boys are looking all the time when they are awake — they only listen on occasion. The stained

glass windows rich in religious suggestiveness, like the elaborate stone carving on the cathedrals at Chartres and Amiens, were originally meant to be the Bibles of the illiterate. They are Bibles still for children who study the mysterious figures instead of listening to the sermon.

And those windows had best be given not solely to representations of the passive, suffering Christ so dear to the hearts of Christians past middle life. Let there be also an effective portrayal of those scenes in his life which appeal to the active, resolute, heroic element in the life of the boy.

The Father's house should be a house of prayer and of wholesome meditation for all nations and all ages, for all moods and all temperaments. If the great truths of the Bible are there in finely colored glass it may be that when the boy's interest in the sermon flags between "thirdly" and "fourthly," his eyes will behold the vision of glorious manhood held against the sun; and beholding it with open face and mind intent he may be changed into the same image.

The boy's interest is also developed by an active participation in the service, the hymns, the responses, the prayers. Boys are listless when they might be ready for active participation in the worship of the hour if fewer mature men showed themselves silent partners in the august business of worship. In that pew where the father joins heartily in the singing and the responses the boy is likely to do the same. But the man whose worshipful interest is entirely exhausted in holding up one side of the hymn-book while his wife reads the responses and sings God's praise in her gentler soprano is teaching every boy who sees him that active participation in the worship of God's house is not for the masculine nature.

The Master uttered a terrible word of warning to those

who cause the immature life to stumble. "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offenses. It must needs be that offenses come" — with the undeveloped morals of the race it is inevitable — "but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh."

How far have we laid that stern counsel to heart! What do the cotton mills in the South employing thousands of little children under fourteen years of age say? What do the glass factory and the coal breaker in Pennsylvania and the cigar factories in West Virginia where boys of twelve and fourteen are working to their moral and physical detriment say? What does any shop or factory which steps in to rob the schoolroom and the playground by its economic greed say?

We are moving. Public sentiment has been aroused by books and magazine articles. Women's Clubs and labor unions have promoted a wholesome agitation. The cry of the working child has pierced the thick veil of ignorance and indifference which once made his position hopeless. The cry of the child, shrill, feeble, plaintive because he is being worked too soon or too hard, is being re-enforced by the mature voice of Christian sentiment.

Child labor is thrice cursed! It curses the child who performs it. It curses the adult men and women who are out of work, having been thrust aside to make room for cheap, immature labor. It curses the employer who deadens his own conscience in order to profit by the exploitation of the helpless.

There are certain years sacred to the formation of cell and tissue necessary to the growth of body and mind if these are to become tall and broad, sound and wise. And much of this process must be carried on in the open air

where children love to play. Where a child of twelve is working in a cotton mill breathing cotton waste and inhaling the smell of machine oil ten hours a day, or inhaling tobacco dust in a cigar factory or coal dust on the breaker, this normal, physical and mental unfolding does not take place.

And the moral effects of child labor are yet more serious. The boy doomed to monotonous work in the mill when he should be at school or at play released at night from the grind of toil most readily reacts into those forms of vicious indulgence which are damning. The employment of boys in occupations which pave the way for moral corruption, in hotels where dissolute men and women congregate, in theaters where problem plays and indecent exhibitions are given, in messenger service where young lads are sent ofttimes to the red light district, is altogether vicious. The Federal Committee on Child Labor brought out the fact that messenger boys of twelve and fourteen are more than ready to be sent to the disreputable districts both to satisfy their growing curiosity touching matters of sex and because of the generous tips and the presents of fruit and candy lavished upon them by dissolute women.

When children are gathered out of the country into the city to work in mills and factories it is urged in defense of the practice that they were accustomed to work on the farms whence they came. But working out of doors on a farm, with the intermissions of rainy days and leisure seasons, by the side and under the eye of a father, is a very different thing from working for a boss in the stolid, uncompromising labor of a mill. "Letting your own child work for you is very different from allowing another man to work your child."

The immature cash girls in many of our department stores make a pathetic appeal. A divine law is violated

when young girls of twelve and fourteen and sixteen are compelled to stand all day long, week in and week out, month in and month out. A divine law is violated which no chamber of commerce or state legislature enacted and which no human organization can ever repeal. The future vigor and character of a large section of the human race is there being determined and society cannot afford to look with indifference upon a process which poisons the stream of life at its source.

Jesus set the child in the midst and the treatment of the child has become an index of the civilization of any land. Let our Christian civilization take the child and set him in the forefront of its interest, safeguarding his physical, mental and moral unfolding by a wise and generous nurture.

LVI

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10 : 25-37

" What shall I do to inherit eternal life? " the lawyer asked. Jesus invited him to state his own view of the matter — " How readest thou? " The lawyer glibly recited the two commands about loving God and loving one's neighbor. Jesus assured him that he had " answered right" — if he would do this he would live.

But wishing to justify himself in what his conscience told him had been a selfish life, he called for a definition of the term, " Who is my neighbor? " And the first words in that great answer as contained in this splendid parable were these — " a certain man " —

The teaching of Christ was always concrete. He never used great swelling terms such as " philanthropic interest " or " altruistic effort," as the manner of some is who may not have learned to be neighborly with the " certain men " whose lives they touch. There is no " humanity " to be loved and served — only certain men. There is no impersonal or abstract neighbor to be loved — the only reality in the case is " a certain man." The picture of neighborliness drawn here serves to bring the second great commandment down out of the clouds and back out of the fog of vague generalities, making it effective by directing it toward " certain men."

" Who is my neighbor? " A certain man; a man near you; a man who needs you; a man whom you have it in your power to help! The readiness to meet the needs of

each situation as it arises becomes the measure of each man's love.

The "certain man" varies from hour to hour. Life is made up of new occasions and fresh opportunities. The Samaritan riding along toward Jericho did not know anything about the wounded traveler, but a bend in the road brought him face to face with a fresh call for service. Here was a new neighbor whom he was called upon to love! The responsibilities which attach to the neighborly spirit cannot be laid down in advance by hard and fast lines — they are constantly shifting.

There were two men on that Jericho Road, the priest and the Levite, who belonged to that innumerable company who "look on." The priest was brutally cold — he passed by with a hurried glance. But the Levite came and "looked at" the suffering man, inquired his name perhaps, asked how many robbers there were and how much of his money they took. Then having gotten all the particulars and having expressed his great regret that such things were permitted in this wicked world, he too passed by on the other side.

The men who idly look on may oftentimes make a fair show in the flesh. They express themselves on occasion in such a way as to indicate that they are men of excellent sentiments and of fine feeling. They meet and organize, adopting constitutions and by-laws and appointing extensive committees. They hear addresses and discuss papers and eat big dinners in the cause of human betterment. They are eager to vote for ringing resolutions on the subject both hands up. And then after going through all the motions and indulging in a lot of fruitless talk, they pass by, having accomplished nothing.

The idle exercise of pity quickly shades off into unwholesome self-indulgence. The professional funeral goers, the

" slumming parties " who go, not to collect data for useful effort, but to gratify their curiosity, the first cabin passengers by sea or by land who go down into the steerage that they may give their sympathies an airing, the morbid natures delighting in problem plays and shady novels which give them the excitement of an excursion into the realm of vice without the fear of open disgrace, all these Levites who come close to misery, study it, gaze upon it, photograph it with their kodaks and then pass by with no effort at practical relief, are held up to scorn in that telling phrase of the Master — " Looked on him and passed by."

There is an idle, speculative, on-looking interest in politics also which enrolls its quota of Levites. These intense lovers of pure municipal government are willing to read the *Nation* regularly; they applaud mightily when some pungent orator scores the bosses. They hold up their hands in pious horror over the doings of Tammany. They beat upon their breasts and rend their garments at the very mention of certain iniquities down at the City Hall, or up at the State House.

Yet somehow they lack stomach and zeal to get down from their high horses of condemnation in order to do the bloody, dusty work of getting the robbed and wounded city government upon its feet. They are unwilling to grapple at arm's length with primaries, caucuses and ward organization in the interest of clean politics. They come over and look upon the distressing situation and then with the detached Levite pass by on the other side.

When the Samaritan appeared on the scene he struck another note. Heretic though he was, he felt an instant compassion for that helpless man. He got off and went to him. He bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine — a little oil to make the bandages soft, and a little wine down the man's throat perhaps to revive him, for he was

" half dead." He finally got the man up " and set him on his own beast " and took him along to an inn. He was ready to walk that a needier man might ride.

He unconsciously, as Dr. Peabody has pointed out, fulfilled the various demands in the program of modern scientific relief work. He felt at the start that humane sympathy which is the driving force of all charitable effort. He brought temporary relief to one who would have died without it. He then wisely removed the sufferer to restorative conditions. He furthermore provided for continuity of effort — " Take care of him," he said to the innkeeper, " and I will repay thee," giving his money, not to " the case," but to the institution.

Here is a full-page, life-size picture of what Christian service means! It is personal; it is self-sacrificing; it is ready to get off that a needier man may ride; it will suffer delay and inconvenience to accomplish its end; it will take hold of men who are bloody and dusty, becoming bloody and dusty itself in order to help them.

Most of us are mounted. We may not be riding in a coach and six, but each one has at least what the Samaritan had, a small Syrian donkey under him. We have some money, more than enough to suffice for actual needs. We have homes, not palaces perhaps, but places of peace and comfort — and it is a great help to a man in making the journey of life to be mounted on a good home. We have intelligence — not as much as we wish, but enough to be of great service. We have some measure of goodness — nothing prancing or showy, but like the Samaritan's donkey, plain, quiet, useful, every-day goodness.

We ride along on these advantages of ours and see men by the roadside robbed, wounded and left helpless. They have been injured in mind, body and estate. There they are, scattered along the side of the road! They will not

be able to complete their journey without some friendly lift. And the chance of inheriting eternal life, according to this teaching, turns upon each man's willingness to get down and set some needy life upon his own beast, thus enabling him to live.

It is neither difficult nor noble for a healthy, well-born, intelligent man to ride his own donkey from Jericho up to the New Jerusalem, robbing no one, wounding no one, simply riding and letting ride. But this is not the way to inherit eternal life. The man who rides up to the gate of heaven comfortably mounted on his own advantages, bought and paid for though they may have been, without having used them along the way to aid other less fortunate men in reaching the gate of heaven, may find the gate shut. The very essence of Christianity is the willingness to get down from off some advantage which rightfully belongs to us in order to set some needy man upon it.

" Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus." He was in the form of God and counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God. But he made himself of no reputation. He took upon himself the form of a servant. He dismounted and became obedient to the demands of a most exacting service, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God and men alike have highly exalted him until his name is above every name!

How ugly is the sight of the man who thinks that the chief end of man is to save his own soul and enjoy it forever! He picks out some statement of theological belief, saddles and bridles it with certain emotional experiences through which he has confidently passed; he then mounts it and rides serenely toward what he believes to be the New Jerusalem. He feels sorry for the moral failures on the roadside, helpless and half-dead in their sinful unbelief. He may offer a prayer for them or perhaps hand each one

a tract as he passes, but he rides on secure and happy in his own spiritual advantages. That man's religion is vain, and the place where he is liable to bring up is not called "The New Jerusalem."

This passage indicates the power of that plain kindness which has upon it no fringe or border of direct religious exhortation. The parable has seemed defective to certain high and dry minds in that this lawyer inquiring the way of eternal life is simply shown the picture of the kindly Samaritan and told to "go and do likewise." It seems perilous to leave the account without a single note of warning touching his Samaritan heresies.

But that is the way Jesus left it — he had a wonderful faith in the transcendent power of self-sacrifice. He exalted the significance of that kindness which is personal, heartfelt, loving. The most sanguine words Jesus ever uttered touching the prospects of his Kingdom were these: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me. This he said signifying what death he should die." It was the sober estimate of the Son of God upon the power of self-sacrificing love.

LVII

THE PERSISTENT PRAYER

Luke 11 : 1-13

" As he was praying in a certain place one of his disciples said, Lord, teach us to pray." They had never heard it in that fashion. He prayed as never man prayed. It is significant that we have no record of their asking, " Lord, teach us to preach," or, " Teach us to heal," though preaching and healing both lay within their prescribed duties. They went back of these outward expressions of spiritual life to the source of life itself. " Teach us to pray! "

" When ye pray say, Our " — the first word in the petition must be an unselfish expression of sympathy with the needs of others. The second word in the petition would bring that sympathy up to the source of help — " Our Father."

How much it means that this model prayer does not open with the word " I " or " My." Self-interest is not thrust into the foreground. The personal claims are merged in that larger request which is voiced in the word " Our."

When Henry Ward Beecher lectured at Yale he told the boys that it was his custom while the choir was singing just before the prayer in Plymouth Church to allow his eyes to range freely over the congregation. Here was a family where sorrow had pulled down every shade in the house, shutting out all sunshine! Here was a man carrying a heavy load which made him stagger! Here was a brave woman wearing a smile on her face, for the sake of those

other lives, when her heart was like lead! Here was a young fellow fighting all the wild beasts Paul saw at Ephesus in the temptations he had to meet! Here were people snug, prosperous, contented, in peril of damnation through "fatty degeneration of the soul." Here was a congregation massing up all the needs in the moral calendar! Just to look at them with that expectancy in their faces and the unspoken needs hidden away in their hearts brought the soul of the preacher into a sympathetic mood. When he stood up to pray it was easy for him to say, "Our."

When ye pray, look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. When you enter your closet and shut the door, you are not to shut out your neighbor's needs — you cannot pray aright if you do. The fervent effectual prayer of "a rightened man" which availeth much springs ever from a heart possessed by sympathy.

Dr. Jowett once said that "our spiritual bread would taste sweeter if we invited more guests to the table we seek to spread through our devotions." It has an enlivening effect upon the home table to see new faces there occasionally and to know that others are sharing in the joys of the family circle. Be hospitable if you would see your spiritual table spread profusely by the hands which blessed the loaves and broke them. Invite into your personal devotions those lives which are faltering in their struggle — put your faith and hope under them that they may not fail. It will keep your petitions from becoming stale and monotonous if you constantly introduce new faces, new interests, new fields of activity to your prayerful heart.

When you begin your prayer, say "Our Father" — for prayer is the act of a child entering into companionship with his father. How natural and rational it is

therefore. The boy who never speaks to his father is both wicked and morbid. We make our prayerful requests with filial freedom and confidence, but they must proceed from filial hearts. We must stand before God in reverent, obedient trust in order to utter even the first two words of that familiar prayer. We must have found our places in his house, at his table, in his service, as obedient children, before the total nature can look up and say, "Our Father."

The Lord's Prayer contains but one petition for material blessing and that modestly limits itself to asking for one day's bread for the immediate need. The other five petitions are for the hallowing of the divine in all our thoughts and all our attitudes; for the coming of that rule of the divine spirit which shall usher in God's Kingdom; for the doing of his will on earth as it is done in heaven; for forgiveness to be granted to those souls which in their turn show themselves forgiving; and for such guidance and help as will issue in deliverance from evil. This furnishes the "norm" of appropriate petition. The model prayer moves mainly in the realm of spiritual values and all prayer offered after the method and in the spirit of Christ will place its emphasis after this manner.

We have Scriptural warrant for praying in regard to interests other than those directly spiritual, but it should be done always with an eye to the bearing of those benefits on the coming of his Kingdom. The material advantages sought for stand subordinate to the spiritual benefits which are the supreme ends to be gained. Pray for health, if you will, for intelligence, for opportunities, for the success of all legitimate plans, that in and through these you may the more perfectly glorify God as a useful servant of his holy will. Let the farmer pray for rain if he will to save his crops. However much or little his petitions may affect

the weather — this lies beyond our ken — he may be sure that his prayer will deepen a spiritual relation of more value than many crops. He will by his devotions strengthen that relationship which will yield thirty, sixty, perchance a hundredfold in terms of a priceless harvest.

Jesus related this parable to indicate what perseverance would accomplish in the face of unfavorable conditions. A selfish, grumpy man was in bed at midnight. His neighbor came to the door to ask for a loaf of bread to set before a hungry guest who unexpectedly had fallen upon an empty larder. The sour, crabbed fellow did not begrudge him the bread — when once he was up he gave him as much as was wanted — but he disliked the trouble of getting out of bed; he was afraid of waking the baby, for his "children were with him in bed"; he shunned the discomfort of coming to the door in the darkness and cold of the night.

But because that neighbor persisted in knocking until the selfish man could not sleep, he rose and gave him what he wanted. The Master was not undertaking to represent God by this selfish, sour-hearted churl. He was indicating what persistence and perseverance would accomplish even in the face of adverse conditions.

In the parable the obstacles to be overcome were within, lodged in the heart of that unobliging man. In the case of prayer to God the obstacles are on the other side of the closed door — they are in us. The obstacles are to be found in our own selfishness, in our distrust, in our sins, which hinder us when we attempt to offer that fervent, effectual, availing prayer.

But here as there perseverance triumphs over obstacles. If a man will ask and keep on asking; if he will seek and keep on seeking; if he will knock at that closed door and keep on knocking, the very persistence of his spiritual

appeal will bring that quality of life where he will "receive" and "find" and see the closed door "opened."

The argument of Jesus in this parable was to this effect: If God were no better than this sour and selfish man who was unwilling to disturb himself in order to do a favor for a neighbor in an emergency, it would still be worth our while to ask him for what we need — persistent asking overcomes obstacles. How much more when the One we ask is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The warrant for asking and the assurance of success are to be found in the unstudied and abiding instincts of earthly parents. "If a son ask bread of any of you that is a father will he give him a stone? If he ask a fish will he give him a serpent? If he ask an egg will he give him a scorpion? If ye then being evil give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him."

The children were asking for "good things," for necessary things — "bread, fish, eggs," and not for luxuries and bric-a-brac. When we pray for those plain, universal necessities to gain sustenance and direction for the inner life, we may pray with the same hearty confidence which accompanies the natural requests of healthy children in a well ordered home.

Hear the argument of John Fiske for the validity of spiritual experience. The subjective powers in man have always been developed, he says, with reference to objective realities. "The eye was developed in response to the outward existence of radiant light; the ear in response to the outward existence of acoustic vibrations; the mother love came in response to the infant's need. Every stage of enlargement has had reference to actual existences outside; everywhere the internal adjustment has been brought about so as to harmonize with some actually existing external fact."

"Now if the relation thus established in the twilight of man's existence between the human soul and a world immaterial and invisible is a relation of which only the subjective term is real and the objective term non-existent, then I say it is something utterly without precedent in the whole creation."

If the capacity of man for fellowship with God through prayer is real only at our end of the line and unreal at the other, then it is an utter break in the whole method discerned in the uniformities of nature. It is the verdict of this philosopher therefore and of an ever growing volume of valid human testimony that there is an everlasting reality in the relation of the human soul to God. Wherefore men ought always to pray.

LVIII

WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS!

Luke 12 : 13-34

The Gospel of Luke is the most radical of the four touching the perils of property. He sees the constant liability of the successful to fall into a haughty, showy, self-satisfied mode of life fatal to Christian character. He alone records the parables of "Dives and Lazarus," of "The Unjust Steward" and of the "Foolish Rich Man." His version of Jesus' sayings about wealth are much more radical than are the parallel passages in Matthew. His warnings to those whose pleasure in material things has dulled the conscience are the plainest in Scripture.

His fundamental principle may be found in these words of Christ — "A man's life consists not in the abundance of the things he possesses." No life can be judged by the pile of things it has amassed. Each life is to be judged by the use it makes of the things, by the sort of relation that use establishes between the owner and his fellows.

"How much is that man worth?" The reply commonly comes back in a statement as to the value of the things he owns. This is what you wished to know perhaps, but it tells you nothing about the worth of the man — it only tells you the price of the things.

The man may be worth a great deal — if he has been doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with God, he has great value in addition to all the things he may possess. If he has been unjust, hard, selfish, then he is scarcely worth anything. The worth of the man turns upon

his qualities of mind and heart, upon the amount of good he has done and the sort of character he has won.

"There is no real wealth but life," Ruskin said — "life with all its powers of love, joy, admiration. That country is richest which nourishes the largest number of noble and happy human beings. That man is richest who has the widest and deepest influence for good upon the lives of others." The life is ever a thing personal and apart from the things possessed, be they many or be they few.

In urging this plain truth Jesus sought to allay the anxiety which many people feel touching their possessions "Be not anxious what ye shall eat or drink or put on." These are not matters of indifference — the Heavenly Father knows that we have need of all these things — but they are not the main issues. Yet how many people boost these questions into an unwarranted prominence.

"What shall we eat?" How much of it? How costly shall the dining-room be where we eat it and the kitchen where it is prepared? How many servants shall we keep to cook and to serve it? How much shall we spend on the linen and the china, the silver and the cut glass we use in getting it down our throats? There are well-to-do people who live in a chronic state of anxiety over these questions which have to do with eating.

"What shall we put on?" and what is still more vital, "How will it look when we get it on?" How numerous, how costly and of what particular style shall these all-important garments be? The simple question of clothes eats up a large section of the time, thought and money in many a life.

Whole sections of modern society are kept on a tension — the men in making the necessary money and the women in spending it — by these two plain questions as to what shall go into these bodies of ours and what shall be wrapped around them.

Yet what simple matters they are! It does not require much food to maintain health and strength. John Muir takes a bag of bread, a piece of bacon, a handful of tea and goes off in the Sierra Nevada mountains for a month — and with all his expósure he abides in health and strength at a ripe old age. We have made eating unnecessarily difficult with elaborate dishes alike perilous to purse and to stomach.

We have also made the outer wrappings of these bodies of ours a veritable burden of anxiety. We must wear something for comfort, for decency, for beauty, but how difficult and expensive we have made the matter of covering the human body! Display is the ruling idea rather than comfort. And all the costly, irritating, vulgar display in this matter of dress, with the consequent fret and fuss, is in flat defiance of the Master's word.

In the face of this fretted, worried habit of mind, Jesus pointed to the birds and to the flowers. "Consider the ravens — they neither sow nor reap, yet God feeds them. Consider the lilies, how they grow — they toil not nor spin, yet God clothes them. Ye are much better than they."

Sweet and beautiful ideals these are, but to many a busy person they seem futile. He cannot be a lily or a raven and do his work. He throws out the whole passage as a piece of sentimental idealism uttered by an Oriental dreamer and entirely unsuited to this active Western world. Thus men take the letter of Scripture which killeth and neglect the spirit which maketh alive.

The lily does not toil nor spin — it was not made to toil and spin. It does the things it was made to do. It reaches down into the soil claiming its nourishment. It looks up steadily into the face of the sun claiming light and warmth. It opens wide its leaves to the rain and the dew,

drinking the water of heaven. So it grows! It lives out its lilyhood and God clothes it with beauty.

The ravens do not sow nor reap — they were not made to sow nor reap, nor are they impelled to build storehouses and barns. They do the things they were meant to do. They fly about, keen of eye and strong of wing, seeking their meat from God. And in the great abiding order which enfolds them they find their food. They live out their ravenhood and God feeds them.

Live out your manhood and your womanhood, doing the things you were meant to do and God will feed and clothe you! You will not cease toiling and spinning — you were not made to be lilies. You will not give up sowing and reaping — you were not made to be ravens. You will strive for your self-realization along the line of the divine purpose for you. And when you do just that, you will be lifted above the fret and worry into a serene peace. In the great abiding order which enfolds your life, you too will be fed and clothed. Seek first the sway and rule of the divine spirit in your life, bringing it into that harmony which the birds and the flowers show with his purpose for you and all things necessary will be added.

The Master was moved to utter this great principle by the impatient word of a man who said, "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me." The father had died leaving an estate over which the sons had quarreled after the manner of some. Jesus answered, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" No one had. The Master declined to pass upon the division of the estate.

But he had something to say to both disputants — "Beware of covetousness." He would warn both parties against that selfish, short-sighted exaltation of material values to the supreme place which ever arrays men in antagonism.

The Christian Church does not undertake to be a judge or a divider in economic disputes. The employés in a given industry may demand higher wages while the employer maintains that he is paying all that the business warrants. The church does not undertake to pass upon the economic question as to the proper amount of wages. But it has something to say to both parties. Beware of covetousness!

The Christian employer is in duty bound to pay in wages an equitable share of the returns of the industry to those plain toilers who help maintain it and not retain an unfair amount of the joint product for his own showy luxuries. Wage-earners are in duty bound to accept those wages which can be shown to be equitable and not insist upon a scale that would destroy the industry which affords them a livelihood. The exact amount of the wage must be determined by sound economic judgment in the light of all the facts, but the spirit in which that question is discussed and determined is a constant and an immediate object of the Church's concern.

There was a man who gained more than his barns would hold. He tore them all down and built greater. He then speedily filled those bigger barns. He estimated his own well-being in terms of that which is to be found in barns. He said to his inner life: "Take thine ease! Thou hast enough laid up to last for years. Eat, drink, be merry."

God bluntly called him "Thou fool." And the discriminating part of the world calls him "fool." And in the clearer light of that morning which followed upon the night when his soul was required of him, he called himself all kinds of a "fool."

"This night thy soul shall be required — *then* whose shall those things be?" Not his surely, for he could carry none of them with him. Not his surely, for he had not

used them to develop character in his own life or in the lives of other men whose interests were bound up with his own. He had given his life to the filling of barns and now in the presence of those searching standards which have to do with moral and spiritual values, he found himself destitute indeed. "So is every one who lays up for himself and is not rich toward God!"

The highest word of commendation in scripture touching the use of property was spoken, not to the generous almsgiver, but to the wise and faithful steward administering his possessions with such intelligence and conscience as to make them a blessing to the entire community. The giving outright of a hundred thousand dollars in charity is an easier and a lower task than the investment of that amount in some useful industry to be so maintained as to give healthful, remunerative employment to a hundred human beings. This higher, harder task is the work of the faithful steward who comes in for a royal benediction.

LIX

THE FIDELITY OF THE SERVANT

Luke 12 : 35-48

" Blessed are those servants whom their Lord when he cometh shall find watching." Their master had tarried late at a wedding, but meanwhile the servants were on duty. They had their long, flowing Eastern robes tucked into their girdles and their lamps lighted. When the Master returned and knocked, they were ready to " open unto him immediately."

It was a simple, commonplace service they rendered, just as the larger part of what we all do six days in the week, not to say seven, is thoroughly commonplace. The housekeeper makes beds which have already been made hundreds of times, and they will all have to be made again tomorrow morning. The business man goes to his store to talk about sales, figure on contracts and write letters, the same sort of sales, contracts and letters to which he has been giving attention for years. The teacher enters her schoolroom to face forty restless urchins, the same sort of urchins she has been facing ever since she was elected, none of them eager to be educated, but all of them looking upon her as the common enemy. The minister enters his study to prepare two more sermons for next Sunday — he has been busy for the last twenty years " getting ready for next Sunday," and here he is doing it again.

It is not given to many people in any generation to do startling, heroic or memorable things. You could get all the remarkable people in any century into one small

building, leaving the rest of the human race outside doing commonplace things. We are like the switch engines down in the freight yard — we are never hitched to the "Overland Limited" to draw it swiftly and surely across the continent until it lands its passengers at the Golden Gate. We are puffing to and fro within the limits of a narrow yard, doing the plain work which somebody must do if the great traffic of human existence is to be carried along.

But when these homely tasks are done with watchfulness and fidelity, they take on at once a deeper meaning and a higher value. When the master of the house found his faithful servants watching late into the night, he did a most extraordinary thing to show his appreciation. "He girded himself and made them sit down to meat and came forth and served them." Inasmuch as they had shown their fidelity in serving him, he will serve them by ministering in gracious fashion to their pleasure.

The drudgery of service is commonplace, but the doing of one's best is not commonplace. Business men who are large employers of labor tell me that it is by no means easy to get men who will do what they can do and do it well and keep right along doing it just as the clock keeps on ticking and striking and telling the hours. The man who is found doing his duty whether the eye of inspection falls upon him in the second watch or the third watch or in the gray dawn is a man to be sought out and honored. "Blessed are those servants." They are not serving those "who are their masters according to the flesh with eye service as men-pleasers," but "in singleness of heart they are serving God."

When Colonel Waring was placed at the head of the street cleaning department of the city of New York he found the streets and alleys dirty, the sanitary conditions bad and the death rate high. Now the work of the scaven-

ger is a lowly form of service. He goes about in humble fashion with his shovel and broom, or carries out the ashes and garbage from the back door, to be hauled away to the dump. The first thing Colonel Waring did was to dignify that service by dressing up all the street cleaners in white uniforms. He then marched them up Fifth Avenue in a great parade, each man carrying his shovel and broom, as soldiers carry their guns when they march through our streets on their way to the front. He then lined them up and told them that they were " the conservators of the city's health "; that they were there " to protect the great city of New York from the inroads of disease as it is bred in filthy streets."

When those Irishmen and Italians heard themselves talked to like that, every man of them added two cubits to his stature. He took up his shovel and broom as the insignia of an honorable service. He had his calling interpreted to him by the master he served and he went forth to fight his good fight against the attacks of disease. And when we read that under Colonel Waring the death rate went down from twenty-six to nineteen, and when we think of the suffering and sorrow thus averted from countless homes, we know that he was right. The faithful servants of the city were found with their loins girded and their lamps burning, doing their duty in the watch assigned them with a high sense of its far-reaching significance.

The other illustration Jesus used to show the need of watchfulness was the unexpected coming of the thief. If the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not have allowed his house to be broken into. Here is the same demand that those protectors of the common interest shall be alert, on their feet, girded for action, ready to repel attack!

The moral life of the individual and of the race needs

to be on its guard against those insidious enemies whose approach is stealthy, unexpected and malevolent like the approach of the thief. "Be ye therefore ready also." Eternal vigilance is the price of character. The man of fine purpose if he is not to be deflected from his course, or cast down from his high level of thought and feeling, or baffled in his effort to accomplish good by some unexpected turn of events, must likewise be alert, on his feet, girded for action, with his zeal burning.

How many enemies are abroad, creeping along the dark side of the street, intent upon robbing the innocent of their money, of their good names, of their faith or of their character. Wolves do not always come in wolves' clothing, with teeth and claws and shaggy hair — they come in sheepskin and fine wool or they may come arrayed like the pretending grandmother of Red Riding Hood. Their appearance is deceptive. Therefore the Master says," Watch." Faith in Christ is an invaluable possession and there are thieves abroad to steal it. "Take heed then what ye hear." Many a Christian had he known in what companion or book or play the thief would come, "would have watched and would not have suffered his house to be broken up."

Here Peter, always the spokesman for the Twelve, breaks in: "Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?" In the parallel passage in Matthew we find a direct reply to Peter's question, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." In the interests of character (both his and our most valued possession) Jesus insists upon that loyal vigilance necessary for its safeguarding.

The high quality of watchful fidelity here demanded is only possible to the spirit of moral faith. Here is a lonely picket out at the edge of the lines! The night is cold and stormy as he paces to and fro in the dark and sleet, weary and anxious. He does not know the present location of

the enemy's forces. He does not know what marches are projected for the next day. He has been suffering hardship and exposure for weeks with no adequate understanding of the general plan of the campaign.

But because he is enlisted in the army of a competent and beloved General he feels all the while that there is one at Headquarters who does know the location of the hostile forces, whose wise plan of campaign is slowly being worked out. He is thereby nerved and steadied for all his hard tasks by his faith that he is contributing to the victory which lies ahead.

" Without faith it is impossible to please him." Without faith our courage falters in the face of danger. Without faith the will goes lame in the presence of persistent demand for patient effort. Without faith we are puzzled even unto despair. But when we know that there is One at Headquarters under whom we are enlisted, our hearts are replenished with those impulses which issue in fidelity of action.

The fate of those unfaithful servants, who because of the delay in the coming of their master began to beat their fellows and to be drunken, is here drawn in fearful terms. The lord of those servants came at an hour when they were not looking for his return and surprised them in their evil deeds. He " cut them asunder " and " appointed them their portion " with the outcasts.

Yet even here we find the equitable principle of a gradation of punishment. The servant who knows his lord's will and does it not is beaten with many stripes, while the servant who knows not the exact nature of his duty, but commits acts worthy of stripes shall receive a punishment less severe — he shall be beaten with few stripes. The system of graded penalties is only fair — for " to whom much is given of him will much be required."

It brings out the duty of our own nation and of this generation in bold relief. To us beyond any other nation much has been given. We are rich in untouched resource, in noble tradition, in freedom of opportunity, in ready access to those lines of influence which if kept wholesome may in Messianic fashion bless all the nations of the earth. Knowing our duty and having power to meet it with competent action, we too shall be beaten with many stripes if we fail to show ourselves alert, on our feet, girded for action, with the lamp of holy influence alight.

LX

MORAL RECLAMATION

Luke 15 : 1-10

It is in the air. What nation having wide areas of arid land capable of cultivation by irrigation does not leave Iowa and Illinois to their own prosperity and concentrate upon Nevada and Arizona until they too shall rejoice in harvests? What corporation owning great tracts of tule swamp along the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers does not leave the fertile acres of the Santa Clara Valley and reclaim those swamps until they feed whole cities with their yield of vegetables? What manufacturer seeing fifty thousand dollars going annually into the ash heap and learning that some valuable by-product could be made from it, does not at once employ an expert to solve the problem and build a reclaiming plant?

This was the line of argument followed by the Master. "These parables get their force because they rest so squarely and broadly upon the everyday feelings and experiences of ordinary men." Here are the courses of action which shepherds with lost sheep in the wilderness and housekeepers with lost coins about the house, and fathers with runaway boys in some far country, have been taking ever since the world began. And when we take the natural instincts of our hearts at their best and raise them to the *nth* power we have the temper and disposition of Him in whose image we are created.

The three parables came as a reply to a criticism. "The publicans and sinners drew near to hear him and the

Pharisees murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." The last named fact was the crowning touch of moral and social insubordination on the part of this Galilean — it was like the open defiance of race prejudice by Theodore Roosevelt when he invited Booker Washington to eat bread in the White House. "Eateth with them" — the sour-visaged Pharisees with vinegar in their veins could not stand for that!

How the world changes — and for the better! "Receiveth sinners and eateth with them" — it was said of Jesus in scorn and with a sneer! It was said of William Booth of the Salvation Army, and it was the glory of his life. The Nineteenth Century saw William Booth received at Court and honored with a degree from Oxford University because he received sinners. The first century saw the Son of Man scorned, spat upon and crucified for doing the same thing. The world moves — there is sunrise everywhere and the promise of a brighter day.

The Master had to defend himself at this point repeatedly by reminding them who he was. "I am a physician," he would say, "and I go not to those who are 'whole,' but to those who are sick — they have need of me." "I am the Good Shepherd — I leave the ninety and nine already secure in the fold to bring in the one that is lost. I am a preacher of salvation — I am sent not to the 'righteous' who need no repentance, but to sinners in sore want of such a message."

What keen thrusts at the moral complacency of those self-satisfied prigs! What delicious irony! "Whole" — and there they were sick unto death in the ugly deformity of their spiritual maladies! "Righteous" — Heaven save the mark! They were perpetrating a horrible caricature upon the very idea of righteousness! "Need no repentance" — and there they were in danger of being damned

because of their stiffnecked unwillingness to make an about face in open penitence. His word to thick-skinned conceit was with power.

The three parables have in common one great central truth, the impulse to recover any valued object which is imperilled by being lost. But they are not recorded in the order best suited to bring out the climax. "The logical order should be, the lost coin, the lost sheep, the lost son; the unconscious coin, the conscious sheep, the guilty and repentant son."

Here in this passage we have those parables which show how the pastoral instinct of the man and the domestic instinct of the woman are at one in moving actively for the recovery of that which is lost. Anything is lost which is out of its right place and therefore failing to fulfill the purpose for which it exists. The sheep is not accomplishing the purpose of sheephood when it is away on the mountains, torn by the thicket, exhausted by its frantic search for its fellows, famished for lack of proper pasturage, frightened and chased by hungry wolves. It is lost!

The coin is not fulfilling the purpose of its minting when it has rolled off into some dark corner or has fallen through some crack in the floor. It is taken out of circulation. Its fate has reduced the ability of that housewife to minister properly to the needs of her family. It might as well be non-existent for any good that it accomplishes for the world. It is lost!

The man is not fulfilling the purpose of his manhood when he wastes his strength in coarse sensual indulgence or in those equally tragic modes of selfish living which show spiritual indifference and spell moral defeat. He is robbing His Maker and robbing the world of the service he has power to render. He forms no part of that circulating

medium of devotion and aspiration with which the moral traffic of the world is carried ahead! He is lost!

In the face of such a situation, the action of the good shepherd is prompt. He leaves the ninety and nine and goes after the one that is lost. The parable makes plain the fact that "a working majority," the ability to vote fifty-one per cent. of the capital stock, does not satisfy the heart of the Master of the Higher Values. He is not aiming merely for "the greatest good of the greatest number" — his redemptive purpose is searching, personal, intimate. He moves straight for that one life which needs him most.

This first parable emphasizes more than either of the others the fact that though the loss in comparison to what is retained be small, still the owner of those values fares forth at once intent upon its recovery. The mother of twelve children misses one face from the table or one tiny form from her protecting arms as promptly and as sadly as the mother of two would miss the half of her brood. And the scale of the Eternal Love is infinite so that in a multitude which no man could number He detects the absence of a single child.

The community of feeling between the shepherd and the sheep underlies this saving impulse. The shepherd has lived with his flock for years on terms of intimate companionship. His loving interest leaping "the wide boundary of their diverse natures has come to know how a sheep feels," as Theodore T. Munger once said. "When it is lost, his shepherd heart goes after it in its strange loneliness, pities its fear as it hears the howl of the wolf, shares its weariness as it wanders aimless, suffers in its degradation as it grows hungry and lean, wild and unlike itself in its danger-haunted life." In like manner, "it is Christ's absolute consciousness of lost humanity that makes him its seeking Saviour."

And when the shepherd has found the unhappy object of his search "he lays it on his shoulders." This was an act unusual. The sheep were commonly led and guided by the shepherd, but each one was expected to follow upon its own four feet. Here, however, compassion overflows its accustomed channels, bearing upon its strength the frightened, wearied, helpless object of its care. What a picture of the seeking, saving, sacrificial love of that Great Shepherd of the sheep!

The greater the nature the more immediate the response to those forces which are universal. The ocean yields to the power of gravitation as the moon changes her position, drawing along with her the mighty tides in a manner not observable in the rivers and lakes. The lesser bodies of water feel the same power, but do not make the same visible response. The greater the nature the more apparent the response made to that universal impulse to recover that which is lost. The love of God for needy humanity makes that supreme response to be found in the gift of his Son to be our Saviour.

When the sheep and the coin were found, both the shepherd and the housewife called in friends and neighbors to share in the rejoicing. "Likewise joy shall be in heaven among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." The lines of sympathy run perpendicularly as well as horizontally. The social gladness of a group of neighbors over the recovery of a lost bit of value has its glorious counterpart in that social gladness which extends into the Unseen World over the moral recovery of a single life.

The Son of Man, knowing what was in man and needing not that any should tell him, so taught that he constantly had the fundamental facts of human nature on his side. When he spoke of prayer, it was, "What man of you if his son asks bread, gives him a stone?" When he spoke of

the work of salvation it was, "What shepherd having lost a sheep does not go after that which is lost until he find it?" He thus steadily proclaimed the great truth that when any man is faced right he has all the moral facts and forces of the universe with him for his re-enforcement. And when he is faced wrong he has all the moral energy of the universe against him.

Here on countless fields this work of moral reclamation advances. Every year less sage-brush and cactus, more wheat and alfalfa. Every year fewer horned toads and gila monsters, more sheep and cows! Every year more men and women who bring peace and good will and fewer who breathe the foul spirit of malice, until at last the glory of the Lord and the goodness of the race shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea!

LXI

THE PARABLE OF THE FATHER

Luke 15 : 11-32

You sometimes hear the remark made by men who know not what they say, " We do not want theology — give us the simple gospel of Christ." But the gospel of Christ is filled to the brim with theology. Jesus was not a censor of morals or a dealer in rules or a ready exponent of graceful sentiment — he was steadily proclaiming truths which are deep and broad and high. He would have scant sympathy with those shallow minds which show themselves ever ready to pour contempt upon theology.

The gospel is made up not of a few moral suggestions with friendly bits of ethical appeal attached — it roots back into a profound philosophy of man as an individual, of human society, of the universe, of God. It can only be preached in its full strength and helpfulness by men who are theologians. In this way alone can the deeper sources of motive, of stimulus and of moral renewal be uncovered and made accessible.

Here is this parable of the Father (sometimes called " the parable of the Prodigal Son " as taking its name from the least worthy of the figures which move across its pages)! The story is told mainly in monosyllables. The literary style is limpid as a mountain brook, but the depths of meaning suggested are fathomless. Here in this one parable there is theology enough for a learned treatise on the ways of God with man extending into six royal octavo volumes! It contains but five hundred and ten words, and

can be read entire in three or four minutes, yet it fairly boxes the compass of fundamental theological belief.

Here is the divine Fatherhood! The man had two sons and his attitude from first to last is parental.

Here is our filial standing in the family of God! The sinful son was still a son, even as the lost sheep was none the less a sheep and never a goat or a wolf. When the young man came back ragged and guilty, footsore and sin-stained, he was still in the eyes of the father, " My son."

Here is our dependence upon God and the unescapable responsibility which springs from it! The son must say to the Father, " Give me," to secure the very means employed in doing wrong.

What is sin? It is the act of a son who would make his life separate and selfish, taking his portion of goods away from the eye of the Father. He refuses any higher direction, or any diviner form of fellowship, to the end that being thus freed from all sense of obligation he may dwell in that " far country."

What is retribution? It is the famine, the sense of wasted substance, the gnawing of unrelieved hunger, the heartless refusal of one's surroundings to give the wrong-doer what is so sorely needed. This penalty comes inevitably when the life has been spending itself in disobedience.

Here is conviction of sin! The young man having gone through all he had, and feeling the bite of retribution, knew that he alone was to blame. He did not say, " Had my father been less indulgent with me," or, " I was unfortunate in some of my associates." He said in frank recognition of his own blameworthiness, " I have sinned." His outward and inward destitution when he was hungry enough to eat husks and lonely enough to make friends with the hogs had come upon him by his own acts.

Here is the first intimation of a coming salvation —

"He came to himself." Salvation is just that — it is self-recovery, self-realization. It was not his real self that had been wasting money and time, manhood and honor, with the harlots — it was a false, unreal self, a usurper to be cast out by his true self.

Here is faith, saving faith! He remembered that he had a father and that in that father's house there was bread enough and to spare. He pictured to himself, by the aid of his moral imagination, a situation far distant. He did it so effectively that it became operative in terms of action. He had faith to believe that the Father would still receive him, at least on the footing of a hired servant, in that house where there was bread for the hunger he felt. And that faith brought him to his feet — he was saved by his faith.

Here is repentance! His hunger, his feeling of regret, his tearful remorse over the loss suffered by his own wrong-doing did not constitute repentance. Repentance is not made up of a series of weak and wet sobs. These may spring merely from a sense of discomfort or from the disgrace one suffers in being found out. Repentance involves definite heroic action — it means an about face morally. "He arose and came to his father" — getting out of the far country, away from the debasing associations, back where he belonged. That was indeed repentance.

Here is the great sublime fact of forgiveness! "His father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him" — and all this before the son had time to utter his carefully framed confession. But it was enough — his presence, his look, his need, all indicated that he was in a mood to be saved.

Here is the open confession of sin demanded for "cleansing the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart." The son had no rest until he stood out

in the open laying the blame nowhere save upon his own perverted will. "I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

Here is consecration! "Make me as one of thy hired servants." In his humble penitence he does not jauntily offer himself as a candidate for the honors and pleasures of sonship in that home of peace and plenty — he will gratefully welcome the humblest form of opportunity for investing his abilities in the service of those interests which are his father's.

Here is the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit! The son was saved and "he was made to know it," as John Wesley would have said. His "heart was strangely warmed," and there came by the direct action of that forgiving love an objective certification to his entrance into newness of life. "Bring the best robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet!" Here were the unmistakable tokens of his acceptance! "Bring the fatted calf and kill it. Let us eat and make merry for this my son was dead and is alive again." Here was the joy of salvation not accepted by a coldly reasoned intellectual process but experienced!

Here was heaven begun on earth! "They began to be merry." He was with his father. He was sharing again in the father's purposes and in his prospects. He was eating bread in his father's house and finding joy in a sense of fellowship restored.

It has been suggested that in this parable there is no suggestion of the great doctrine of atonement. I do not so read it. The father saw the returning prodigal "while he was yet a great way off." How did he come to see him so soon? He had been out looking for him. During those fateful years his eyes had ranged along the winding road which led away toward the far country until it dis-

appeared over the distant hills, not once but a thousand times. He was accustomed to stand at the lower gate looking, yearning, hoping, praying, for the return of his boy — this was the habit of his hungry heart! He was therefore in the place where he could catch the first glimpse of his return, seeing him "while he was yet a great way off."

What do you call this disposition in the heart of the Eternal Father which goes down to the lower gate and looks and longs, suffers and yearns over the sinful son of his love? What do you call that eternal heartache and heartbreak which follows the sinful course of every son who sets himself in the attitude of sinful defiance? "God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself not imputing their trespasses unto them." Here in this disposition, symbolized by "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" as an eternal disposition, I find the infinite compassion which found expression in that supreme effort for moral reconciliation witnessed on the Cross of Christ.

We have gone through the entire list of those articles of theological belief which are esteemed fundamental in the words and terms of this loveliest of the parables. And all these fundamental truths have answered to their names in this roll-call of faith.

"To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we by him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by him." And there is but one Spirit, in which we may enter and through which we may continue in the kingdom of God and that is the filial spirit whereby we become as little children in our Father's love to go no more out. We may well construe our entire system of theological belief in fundamental harmony

with these cardinal positions made plain to us by the Son of God in "The Pearl of the Parables."

The exercise of saving faith does not create a relation — it restores a relation which has been allowed to lapse by wrongdoing. "How natural it all is," Dr. Peabody says! "Here is an infinite law of love at the heart of the universe — that is the center of theology! Here is a world that permits moral alienation through the free will of man — that is the problem of philosophy! He came to himself — that is the heart of ethics! I will go to my Father — that is the soul of religion."

LXII

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

Luke 16 : 1-13

The message in this parable of The Unjust Steward has been a hard saying to many. It seemed to put a premium on dishonesty, and they could not receive it. It seemed to hold up a bad man for Christian imitation.

The dry, literal treatment of it does land us in moral inconsistency. The attempt to find some exact counterpart for each item results in confusion worse confounded. The best of illustrations are not meant to go on all fours — their method of locomotion is not that of the quadruped and four-footed minds are likely to make a mess of them. In every such passage we are to move straight for the central, vital point.

The agent of a rich man was about to be discharged. " Render an account of thy stewardship for thou canst be no longer steward." The agent had too little physical strength to dig and too much pride to beg — so the problem of bread and butter became serious.

He decided to use the brief term of stewardship yet remaining to make for himself friends who in gratitude for favors done to them would receive and aid him when he lost his position. He called in the debtors of his chief one after another, and " wrote off " a certain percentage of each man's indebtedness, giving him a receipt in full.

His principal " commended the unjust steward because he had done " — not honorably nor faithfully nor gratefully but — " wisely." He had acted shrewdly, cleverly,

in his own interest, by using present advantages, brief though his command of them might be, to make provisions for a joyous future.

His shrewd use of means to gain his end is approved — "His lord commended him because he had done wisely." His dishonesty stands condemned — he is censured as an "unrighteous steward." His practical wisdom in dealing with those debtors who owed wheat and oil to his master is commended to those men who have great need of prudence and judgment in dealing with the eternal values.

The central point in the parable is that the Master urges upon the pious people of the world the importance of replacing futile and sentimental methods by those methods which are indicated by the exercise of wise judgment.

Why should the pious ever show themselves stupid? Why should preaching ever be prosy and dull? Why should not men carry the same good sense and availing perseverance into the work of praying that they show in the work of manufacturing?

We are painfully aware of the sore need of such instruction. Vice is eagerly and fearfully awake where virtue is often asleep — it may be "the sleep of the just," but it is a disgraceful slumber when the call is for alert action. The saloon men are long-headed, courageous, persistent where the temperance people frequently show themselves ill-advised, timid, intermittent in their efforts. If the children of light would gain their ends, let them show themselves wiser as well as nobler than the children of darkness. If the children of light were to show themselves for one full round year as shrewd and as resolute as the agents of evil, we should see the kingdom of God coming with power and great glory on many a field where it now lags.

" How often the man of affairs is tempted to feel a certain contempt for the Church of Christ when he turns from the intensely real issues of his weekday world to the abstractness and unreality of religious questions! How fictitious, how unbusinesslike, how preposterous is this internecine sectarianism and impotent sentimentalism where there might be the triumphant march of one army under one flag! Let us learn the lesson which even the grasping, unscrupulous world has to teach — the lesson of an absorbed and disciplined mind giving its entire sagacity to the chief business of life."

Here we find what a rich man said to his agent in commendation of his clever prudence! " And *I* say unto *you*," Jesus added, carrying his plea for better methods to the higher levels of moral effort. " In your own interest make friends by the use you make of your money." Make such friends as will be able when you fail to receive you into eternal habitations. Let your accounts of accumulation and of benevolence show, when you close up your earthly stewardship, that you are indeed " rich toward God." The inculcation of this prudent, far-seeing wisdom which disdains the mere satisfaction of appetite in the passing moment and employs its means for insuring a stable and enjoyable future, stands out as the one great lesson of the parable.

It may be objected that the motive of mere prudence is not the highest form of motive. The point is well taken. The Master did not always bring out the heaviest guns in his moral armament — he gratefully used the small fire of less weighty considerations.

We have the moral deficiencies of this line of appeal set before us in all its nakedness in what is called, " Pascal's Wager." " You must either believe or not believe, that God is — which will you do? Your human reason cannot say.

A game is going on between you and the nature of things which at the day of judgment will bring out either heads or tails. Weigh what your gains and losses would be if you should stake all you have on God's existence! If you win in such a case, you gain eternal beatitude. If you lose, you lose nothing at all. If there were an infinity of chances in this wager and only one for God, still you ought to stake your all on God. Though you risk a finite loss by this procedure, any finite loss is reasonable, if there is but the possibility of infinite gain."

This is not putting it on a very high plane — it is on a very low plane. But the man who would go upstairs must step on the lowest step as well as upon the highest. The Master, therefore, became all things to all men in his varying methods of spiritual appeal that by all means he might save some.

It is a well known fact that generosity makes friends. The unjust steward understood that principle and acted upon it for his own advantage. Generosity makes friends here and hereafter. "It is more blessed," for the life that now is and also for the life which is to come, "to give than to receive." Therefore let the whole administration of your means be like the well-considered work of a man building for himself an eternal habitation and filling it with grateful friends to give him welcome "when he fails."

Having gotten out the main point in the parable clear and strong the Master embodies his teaching in certain definite principles. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." One can judge of a man's character and methods touching those transcendent, enduring values by the measure of wisdom and conscience he shows in the use of his money. Here is the epitaph on the tomb of a French layman who had counted himself the Lord's steward:

"He exported his fortune into heaven by his charities.
He has gone thither to enjoy it."

He was manifestly a man wise as well as faithful in his generation to merit such an epitaph.

"No servant" — *slave* was the word Jesus used, to indicate one who was completely at the disposal of another's will — "can serve two masters. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." It is impossible to be absolutely at the disposal of God and absolutely at the beck and call of material gain without getting things mixed. But it is possible and in the highest degree desirable that every man of affairs should serve God with his money.

You can be the slave of money if you will — and with such a master it will be a dog's life that you will lead. It will be a sad death that you will die. You can be afraid of money and count it an enemy to be feared and shunned if you will. The ascetics run away from money by their wild vows of voluntary poverty, leaving the rest of us to fight the battle without that measure of moral strength which they could have supplied. The wise man makes money, not his master nor his enemy, but his friend; and he uses it in such a way as to make countless other men his friends by the generous service he has rendered with his means.

The teachings of Jesus show a healthy tone regarding this matter of money when we come to group, relate and rightly interpret them. He knew what was in life and needed not that any should tell him. He showed none of the morbid, feverish, panic-stricken attitude which the cloistered ascetics have shown in their scorn of wealth.

The career of an honest man who goes forth to develop the resources of some new region or to increase the scope of some industrial enterprise by making it still more a social utility, and in so doing accumulates for himself a fortune,

makes its appeal to us all. The people who inherit all their money do not necessarily amount to anything —all they had to do was to wait for somebody to die. The men who make their money gambling either at a green table or on the stock exchange do not interest us — to become rich they made other people poor. But the man who stands up with nothing but his own energy of body and skill of brain to accumulate wealth by increasing production does make a strong appeal.

Then if his wise and generous use of his gains makes friends for him and for the whole business of producing and administering wealth in harmony with high principles and noble ideals, he has rendered this world more habitable. He has also aided in building those eternal habitations of good will which may well be made the legitimate objects of our desire.

XLIII

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Luke 16 : 19-31

There is a certain cast iron hardness about this parable. You cannot bend it nor twist it to suit your personal preference. There is no soft spot in it where a selfish man can lie down and feel comfortable. It stands up grim, stiff, ominous.

The harsh aspects of truth have their place in Scripture as in human experience. We are not fed mainly on ice-cream in this world. If any life were given nothing but spoon meat, never setting its teeth on anything hard, it would grow soft and pulpy. The firm, solid truths which need mastication through serious reflection before they can be assimilated have their place on the Lord's table.

This parable contains that oft repeated word of Christ here made flesh to the effect that the unpardonable sins are not the coarse sins of the flesh but the subtler sins of a selfish inhumanity. We note that the fault of the man who found himself in perdition was negative. He stood condemned in the day of judgment — what had he done? Which one of the Ten Commandments had he broken? No crime is mentioned. Killing, stealing, adultery, lying, drunkenness, profanity — none of these is laid at his door.

There is no hint given that he had gained a penny of his wealth wrongfully. He gained a competence, ate well, dressed well, enjoyed himself generally every day in the week. There is nothing wrong in all this. He was damned not by the wicked things he had done, but by his thought-

less, selfish neglect of those humane deeds he ought to have done.

His fault was selfish inhumanity. There at his own gate, where he saw the fellow every time he passed out or in, was a sick beggar. The man was so helpless that he could not ward off the dogs which came and licked his sore face. The rich man was not utterly heartless — he allowed the beggar to have "the crumbs" that fell from his table. The fact that Lazarus received those morsels of kindness accounted for his being there.

But poor men who are sick need something more than "crumbs" of consideration. This something more the rich man failed to supply — the neglected man died at the gate of plenty. He died because he had not received that friendly aid which the rich man could have given him. And because the beggar represented the opportunity for social service brought directly under the rich man's eyes the charge of selfish inhumanity was clearly established.

The plainest warnings Jesus uttered had to do with duties left undone. Study his parables of judgment and you find them aimed straight at sins of omission. The foolish virgins did not stone the wedding procession nor steal the wedding presents nor utter gossipy insinuations about the character of the bride — they were shut out for neglecting to have oil in their lamps. The man of one talent was cast into outer darkness with wailing and gnashing of teeth, not because he had done deeds of evil with his talent — he had done nothing with it. The souls sent away into everlasting punishment had not robbed the poor, nor poisoned the sick, nor fleeced the strangers — they had simply gone their ways doing nothing at all. "Inasmuch as ye did it *not* to the least of these . . . depart from me." Thus the rich man in the parable was simply lacking in those positive qualities of neighborliness which are obliga-

tory under the Christian rule. His selfish indifference to those claims which human need lays upon us all became his damning sin. The way to perdition is paved with moral neglect.

The somber truth is brought out that by such moral neglect men pass beyond recovery. In this parable there was "a great gulf fixed." The souls which would pass from one condition to another could not. The appeal for relief is represented as unavailing. There is such a thing as moral failure which passes beyond the hope of remedy. Character tends to fixity.

The language throughout is that of Oriental parable, but the meaning is plain. The inability of the man to pass from here to there did not arise from the contour of the ground or from any arbitrary decree. The inability was in the man himself. The "great gulf" represents the constant tendency of character to become fixed. Moral choices good or bad may be repeated until the inner disposition is firm set.

The helpless drunkard can recall the time when he could sit down beside his glass of liquor and drink it if he chose or let it alone or empty it on the floor. He could drink half of it and throw the rest out of the window. He was master of the situation. But the day came when he could no longer do that — the liquor had him by the throat. When he tried to return to freedom and sobriety he could not. What prevented him? The results of his own acts registered within. Between him and the sane, sound man who was able to ignore the appeal of rum, there was a great gulf fixed — it had been dug by the hands of his own growing appetite.

Here is a man who lives a prayerless, godless, unloving life until the habit becomes fixed! His lips refuse to move in prayer. His heart makes no response when the name,

the idea, the truth of God is held before him! His own heart does not react in love under the stimulus of human need. Between him and the prayerful, godly, loving life he might have lived there is a great gulf fixed by his own persistent neglect. We ignore any of the higher, finer values in human existence at our peril — by and by we see that they are beyond our reach.

This persistence of type has its good as well as its evil aspect. It aids us mightily when we stand on the right side of the crevass. Good character also tends to fixity. When the right has been chosen a thousand times the appropriate action becomes well-nigh automatic. Between the soul thus established in ways of righteousness and the ways of evil there is a great gulf fixed consequent upon years of plain fidelity to duty.

The parable is not to be pressed on all fours. There is no suggestion here that every rich man goes into a place of torment and every poor man to Abraham's bosom. Dives is not sent to hell because he is rich but because he has shown himself inhuman. The varying circumstances of men of which we make so much were scarcely noticed by the Master. He was intent upon the quality of the life within rather than upon the richness or the simplicity of its outward setting.

The picture includes no reference to the earthly character of Lazarus — this is to be inferred by what followed. And it might have weakened the power of the appeal had Jesus represented him as a saint. It was enough that he was a sufferer. Regardless of his personal worth, his dire need established a claim at Dives' gate which must not be ignored.

How many current estimates are reversed by the Divine Judgment! Jesus called the beggar on the curbstone by name — Lazarus, "One whom God helps." The name of

the man in the palace is not given — he was merely "A Certain Rich Man." In these days everybody knows the names of the rich men and nobody knows the names of the beggars. But the first shall be last and the last first when the more searching appraisement of the Master is laid upon the values involved.

The adequacy of the moral appeal of the truth, all apart from "signs and wonders," is here again affirmed by our Lord. "They have Moses and the prophets — let them hear them." But there was an insistence upon some form of physical demonstration which might further validate the moral claim of the truth. "If one went to them from the dead, they would repent." But the same reply came back, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." It was the habit of the Master to exalt the moral appeal far above the compelling "sign" or "wonder" for which the popular interest clamored. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The inequality of condition pictured and the selfish disregard shown by comfort to helpless need are here condemned by our Lord as in the highest degree reprehensible. They led to a still more glaring inequality of condition in that future world where Lazarus was "comforted" and the selfish worldling was "tormented."

How far can the showy luxury of many professedly Christian households in our own day justify itself at the bar of conscience when ranged up alongside of the bitter, desperate, degrading poverty within gunshot!

There are people in all our cities who live without working — they toil not neither do they spin, yet they are clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day. And there are other people who work without living. They toil and spin in whirring mills and noisy factories;

they dig and delve in the mines; and yet their narrow portion of human satisfaction could scarcely be called by the most liberal interpretation "living." Both classes are a standing reproach to Christian civilization. It is the will of God that all able-bodied, able-minded men and women should "labor six days and do all their work"; and it is his will that in the organization of their efforts and in the principles which control the distribution of the joint product they should come to him that they might have life.

The social demand of our time is for something more fundamental than the occasional open-handed charities from Dives to Lazarus. The note of justice is struck in the prevailing social demand and it is a deeper note than the note of pity. If the people in purple and fine linen had only what they actually earn by useful service rendered to society, and if the men of meager ability had all that they earn undiminished by the unjust toll taken from it oftentimes by those who stand where they can levy upon it, then the threatening unrest and angry agitation would be greatly reduced.

We are all members one of another in the sight of him with whom we have to do. The sore spots in the life of the man at the gate cannot be ignored. The air of haughty indifference and contempt toward the struggles, oftentimes ill-advised and blamable, of the working people is not the atmosphere of the New Testament. The attitude which would deny to the needy anything better than "the crumbs" which fall from the table of plenty is sure to bring its proud possessor into moral perdition. We have Moses and the prophets — let us hear them and heed them if we would avert disaster!

LXIV

THE UNSEEN ADVANCE OF THE KINGDOM

Luke 17 : 20-37

" The Pharisees asked *when* the kingdom of God cometh." They wanted Jesus to name a date for the expected consummation of moral desire. They had fixed their eyes so long and so intently upon the body of religion to the exclusion of any real fellowship with the soul of it that they were incapable of dealing with aught else but the external.

They did not realize that a spiritual kingdom begins in movements which cannot easily be dated. It proceeds by methods which cannot be visibly scheduled. It is like the movement of a cool breeze through a tired city at the end of a sultry day in midsummer. The breeze brings comfort, healing and quickened energy to all the drooping spirits in that city, yet no one can tell exactly where it began or to what point in space it has gone. So is the life that is born of the Spirit. So are the moral movements which are to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. The line of progress cannot be mapped out in advance, nor can dates be set as in the schedules of personally conducted tourists.

The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation and headlines. When the sensation-lovers and the sensation-mongers are saying from noisy platforms and from glowing billboards, " Lo here," or " Lo there," the chances are that they are altogether on the wrong scent. For lo, the Kingdom of God is within!

It has taken the poor deluded world a long time to

accept the implications of this fundamental principle. Its eyes are still upon mechanism and its confidence in some external appliance to usher in the reign of human well-being rather than in those inward, spiritual transformations which have in them potent promise of lasting good.

In these days of wireless telegraphy the ships whisper to each other across the sea. No one who watches the process from the outside sees anything or hears anything — only those who are doing the whispering understand. And in all the busy haunts of men the needs, the yearnings, the unrealized capacities of the plain people are whispering to the heart of God. The maker of headlines and pictures cannot behold this process and say, "Lo here" or "Lo there." But the Lord hears and feels and understands. He is a Perfect Receiver as well as the Great Giver. He hears and makes response and thus the kingdom comes without observation.

In these days when many have fallen into a way of thinking that nothing can be done until we get a majority and a big organization, a Constitution and By-laws, twenty-five committees and much machinery of all kinds, it is refreshing to turn back to the method of Jesus in making the world better. I wonder if he ever served on a committee — nothing is said about it. He moved about among men "a creative, masterful, triumphant personality" with the kingdom of God in his own soul. He spoke to the best that was within the breasts of those he met and that best made its response in such terms that others knew of a truth that the kingdom of heaven was also within them. The power of initiative was in waiting in every human heart listening for the summons to act.

This talk about people being the helpless victims of circumstances; this talk about men being ruled entirely by dollars; this talk about "the economic interpretation of

history" seems like the broken words of men talking in their sleep. The men who advocate these views are building ambitious doctrines on insufficient data. They are over-emphasizing a single set of facts, leaving out of their consideration other determining factors.

Tell the veterans of our Civil War to apply the doctrine of "the economic interpretation of history" to what they did! Tell them that they enlisted and went South to be shot at because of their love for the magnificent sum of fourteen dollars a month and hardtack! They would laugh the notion to scorn. They went down cheerily to hardship, disease and death sustained by their devotion to two great ideals — the preservation of the integrity of our common country and the wiping away from this broad land of the stain of slavery. They knew and we know and God knows that history is shaped by great ideals as those ideals become incarnate in human personality. The kingdom of heaven is within men — it always has been, is now and ever shall be.

If the world of industry is nothing but the fight of a lot of selfish dogs for the possession of some bones, then it does not matter much whether the dogs are living under a capitalistic system or a socialistic system, the biggest dogs will get the best bones and the smaller dogs will stand round licking their chops waiting patiently to take what is left. But if the world of industry is a family of children, with one Father who is in heaven, utilizing the resources placed at their disposal by his wise beneficence; and if that great truth can be made to sink into their souls, maintaining there a sound principle of life, there is hope that the strong will joyously bear the infirmities of the weak and not merely please themselves. There is hope that the principle of consideration for one another shall become our Master and all of us be brethren in the practice of that

method. And that state of life can only come from a new disposition within.

The Master told the Pharisees that. It was not what they wanted to hear. They wanted the exact date of the overthrow of the Roman Rule and the ushering in of a Hebrew Theocracy. Their minds were intent upon the outer machinery of life to which they looked for well-being. It seemed to them a mockery of their hopes to be told that the kingdom of God if it was anywhere was within men. They were eager to see something cataclysmic and catastrophic (to use two very large and unmanageable words), and they could not readily conceive of the advance of a spiritual empire whose action was like leaven.

Then he turned to his disciples and said, " The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man and ye shall not see it." And he pictured the preoccupation of men with external things reaching such a pass as to entirely exclude interest in things spiritual. As it was in the time of Noah — " They were eating, they were drinking; they were marrying, they were being given in marriage (the succession of imperfect tenses indicating how they were wholly given up to external things), until the day Noah entered the ark. So also it shall be in the days of the Son of Man." Jesus foretold that same preoccupation with the external to the defeat of his own spiritual purpose for the race.

It was the same in the days of Lot. They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, as if these material concerns were of the highest moment and of eternal duration, until it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

The naming of these two great catastrophes, the deluge and the destruction of Sodom, in connection with this warning as to a sinful preoccupation with external interests

seems to point to some sudden catastrophe which Jesus was foretelling. In the parallel passage in Matthew it is easy to connect many of his words with the siege of Jerusalem and the flight of the people. But this event would hardly throw light upon the diverse fate of the "two men in one bed," or the "two women grinding at the mill," or of the "two men in the field."

"It is not easy to interpret this series of warning utterances with one consistent application throughout," says W. S. Adeney. "The idea running through them all is that of 'the revelation of the Son of Man.' When that occurs these things will happen. But possibly it may occur in various ways. . . . The language seems to be of a deeper and more mysterious character referring to some greater advent of Christ for the rescue of his people when destruction is to fall upon those who have not heeded his warnings. Possibly Luke has strung together sayings of Jesus on this subject uttered on various occasions and with various immediate bearings, some designed to give specific advice for the time of the siege of Jerusalem, others of wider and more general application to the discriminating judgment that awaits all souls."

It is to be noted that the preoccupation of those who had become so worldly and self-indulgent as to lose all interest in the advance of a spiritual kingdom was with things which are in themselves not only innocent, but praiseworthy. It is meet and right and the bounden duty of men to eat and drink, buy and sell, plant and build, marry and rear families. The warning of Jesus is uttered against that utter absorption of interest in the mere external values and satisfactions to be found in these activities which precludes the seeking and finding of an eternal kingdom of value by the nobler use we make of these things external.

"Remember Lot's wife." The homely reference is to the shortsighted action of one whose reluctance to subordinate her attachment to things external in the face of a supreme duty to escape from the fearful judgment which was overtaking the foul wickedness of the community in which she had dwelt, cost her her life. Remember the folly of those unhappy souls whose fond attachment to things perishable has cut them off from the possession of treasures which endure.

In that primitive picture of moral processes we read that "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." The garden was good, a place of the Lord's own planting, and the trees formed an essential part of it. But somehow the man and the woman allowed the lovely trees which sheltered, shaded and fed them to obscure the God who had given them the garden. "The Great Lord save our civilization and save us from the power of our civilization, keeping us where we can see his face and hear his voice in spite of the trees."

LXV

THE FRIEND OF THOSE WHO HAD FAILED

Luke 18 : 9-15; 19 : 1-10

Here were two men on their way to church. When the service was over one man had gotten something out of it, the other nothing at all. They both went into the temple to pray, and they both prayed — each man brought forth a prayer after his kind. And when they had finished their devotions, one man had been blessed, the other was unblessed.

The whole difference lay in the line of approach. The temple was the same solid stone fact for both men and the temple service with its lessons and its prayers made identically the same appeal to both. But one man stood well up in front, pluming himself on his virtues, thanking God that he was not as other men are, while the other saw nothing, felt nothing, mentioned nothing but his own sense of moral failure.

One man bragged about his virtues; the other begged forgiveness for his sins. One man trusted in himself that he was righteous; the other trusted in God that he would be merciful. One man " pointed with pride," as they say in political conventions, to his moral achievements; the other " viewed with alarm " his own deficiencies. And the man whose mood is indicated in the second half of each of these antitheses went down to his house justified rather than the other.

" The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself." The whole transaction was entirely subjective. He never

got beyond himself nor above himself in the movements of his soul. His prayer did not rise to the ceiling — it did not rise any higher than to the top of his own swollen head. It was indeed a bit of self-congratulatory communion "with himself."

The Pharisee, like all egotists, was expert in his use of the capital I. "I am not as other men are. I fast twice in the week. I give tithes." I, I, I! The big, haughty pronoun, first person, singular number, provocative mood, marched at the head of his prayer like a drum-major with bearskin and big baton. How far he was from the attitude of prayer! How far he was from the Kingdom of God!

And what a wretched ladder he employed in climbing up into his fat complacency! "Thank God I am not as other men are." What other men? "Unjust, extortioners, adulterers." The lowest, meanest men he could name — men who had been robbing their fellows and debauching families. It must have been gratifying to feel that he had not been beaten in a moral race with such rascals!

How lifelike is the picture! When some meager soul seeks to justify his own failure in not having openly professed his faith in Christ and assumed his rightful obligation as a member of the Christian Church, he will often say, "I feel that I can be just as good outside of the church as some church members are." And when you inquire as to the terms of his comparison you find that he is not measuring his spiritual achievements by those of the active and normal Christian. He has picked out some poor runt of a church member who never succeeded in measuring up to anything like the ordinary standard of Christian life and service. "Thank God I am not an extortioner or an adulterer" — what a ground for boastful complacency!

The publican with downcast eye and burdened heart

smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me — a sinner." And he went out blessed rather than the other. Complacency is the foe of aspiration while the sense of need prompts the man who is honest with himself to aspire and to strive. Appetite is a sign of health. Blessed are they that hunger after righteousness — they shall be filled.

But there was another publican who came upon the scene at this time. The second one is not the storied publican of the familiar parable but a real publican in the every-day life of the city of Jericho. And in this case as in the other, salvation came to the man's house and to his heart because the door was open.

In this second passage the Master was dining out. He was dining with a rich man. He had invited himself because the rich man would never have thought of inviting a noted teacher of religion to his home. The rich man had a good home, plenty to eat, and would have been glad to exercise the grace of hospitality, but no respectable person in Jericho would accept his invitations.

The rich man was a publican, that is to say, a tax collector for the hated Roman government. The tax collector in any country is not likely to be as popular as Santa Claus. But in Palestine, where the taxes were "farmed" and a deal of graft and corruption was mixed up with the business of collecting revenue, the tax collector stood socially about where a gambler or a rum seller stands with us. He was ostracized. He could not even go to church without incurring the risk of hearing some Pharisee say, "Thank God I am not as other men are, unjust, extortioners, adulterers, or even as this publican."

It meant much, therefore, when Jesus stopped, looked up into the tree, uttered the tax collector's name in tones of respect and suggested that he would like to dine with him. Zaccheus made haste, came down and received him

joyfully. He walked down the street with the Master at his side as one who dreamed. He had bread to eat which his hungry heart had known not of for many a day.

The people murmured. "Gone to be the guest of a man that is a sinner." They insinuated that "there must be a screw loose somewhere" — a man is known by the company he keeps! They felt that if Jesus were a prophet he would not have passed by all the leading church members in Jericho in order to be the guest of a tax collector.

The Master heard their murmuring but was undisturbed. He was always ready to pay the full price of doing good in his own way. There never was an hour from the time when he faced the devil in the wilderness until he hung upon the cross when he was not willing to be wounded for the transgressions of others, to be bruised by their iniquities that by his stripes they might be healed. He was ready to incur suspicion, ridicule, hatred in order to put himself in open alliance with the better nature of that man whom he would help.

The Master saw within the figure of that hated tax collector another and a better man. Zaccheus, a publican and a sinner, a grafter and a miser! But Zaccheus, also potentially a son of Abraham, a child of the Eternal, a man destined to have his part in that moral movement in which all the nations of the earth are being blessed.

The man within the man! The capacity in waiting, the potential goodness, temporarily overborne by the load of wrongdoing, the raw material for something high and fine in quality — it was that which Christ saw and addressed as he sat at meat in the house of the publican! It is the divine way. The Almighty deals with us habitually, not in terms of our present moral achievement, but with reference to those latent energies awaiting his touch, those hidden

capacities for spiritual advance, which he recognizes in every man.

Here within this blundering fellow whose selfishness and conceit make him so repellent is another fellow of a finer type! Hidden away in that sullen lump of flesh is a real human being waiting for the right touch. It is one of the glories of our Christian religion that it does make silk purses out of sows' ears — even out of such a sow's ear as that.

If that very man could be gotten out from under the cover of his own conceit where he could see that there are stars in the sky, where he could feel the tug and lift of God's interest in him, where he could view himself as he is and as he might be, his repentance would be like the breaking up of a great deep. He might speedily be started on that line of moral advance where he would wear that " new name " which denotes each man's capacity for qualities now in abeyance.

When Jesus by his words and by the power of fellowship at the table of Zaccheus had awakened in the soul of the man desire and resolve for better things, he promptly indicated where those better impulses should find expression. We can judge of what the Master said by the reaction produced in Zaccheus. The man began to get up at the very point where he had fallen down.

The two most serious faults in the life of Zaccheus had been these, he was dishonest and he was stingy. Now the first two words on the lips of this awakened man are " Restore " and " Give." If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. The half of my goods I give to the poor.

" Restore — Give." New words they were on the lips of Zaccheus! Buy, sell, get, gain, hold, enjoy — these words he knew. He could utter them glibly and act upon

them. But "restore" and "give" almost stuck in his throat like Macbeth's "Amen." He had to clear his throat twice to get them out, but out they came, announcing the new principle of action which had come that day to his house.

In theological phrase we call that action "repentance." It is a costly thing, as you see at a glance in the case of this rich man. Tears are cheap — as cheap as rainwater. Remorse is cheap — it may be only the discomfort and humiliation a bad man suffers in being found out. But repentance is more precious than diamonds and rubies. It means an about face, the cutting out of evil habits, the cleaning up of the life, the facing toward the light with one's trust in Him with whom there is no darkness at all. When this process is in operation in any life one can see salvation coming to that house in power and great glory.

This newness of life in Zaccheus began about noon when the two men sat at meat. It grew rapidly. It went on adding cubit after cubit to its stature until before sundown it was showing that sturdy strength which enabled it to do the deeds of a moral giant. When newness of life rises rapidly into such strength as to restore fourfold for every penny taken wrongfully and bestow half of all it has upon the poor, we know that it is a plant of the Lord's own planting.

LXVI

THE PARABLE OF THE HOURS

Matt. 20 : 1–16

Here is a lesson clothed in economic terms and actions so eccentric as to cut straight across the grain of what we esteem right method! The working day when Christ spoke extended from six A.M. to six P.M. This householder hired men early in the morning to work in his vineyard. He hired others at nine o'clock (" the third hour ") and others at noon, others at three o'clock and a final group at five o'clock in the afternoon, having then only one hour to work before quitting time. And when he came to settle with them he paid them all the same wage. He gave them a shilling apiece all around, to those who had worked the twelve hours through and to those who had toiled but a single hour.

It was an odd thing to do. It had the appearance of injustice — had not the men who set to work in the early morning a right to murmur, saying, " These last have wrought but one hour and thou hast made them equal unto us who have borne the heat and burden of the day." The action of the employer would surely provoke discontent and become subversive of discipline in the work of the vineyard. How long could a modern factory run with such fantastic methods of remuneration?

The parable also puts into the mouth of the employer sentiments which seem to us reprehensible. " Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? " What I will? — emphatically no! Where a man wills to do that

which is whimsical or unjust or cruel "with his own" the economic rights of the community are invaded. When the early Christians were in the full enjoyment of a Pentecostal blessing, filled with the Holy Ghost, speaking with other tongues and acting from other motives than those which ruled the hearts of their neighbors, "No man said that aught of the things that he possessed were his own" to do with as he would. We cannot accept such an immoral statement — "Is it not lawful to do what I will with mine own?"

But the Master was not teaching economics — he was teaching morals and inculcating those moods which bear upon the securing and the maturing of the right type of spiritual life. And when we come to study this eccentric picture of a certain economic transaction we find that it does throw a flood of light upon the question of motive.

"The Parable of the Pounds illustrates the proposition that where ability is equal, quantity determines relative merit. In this parable each servant received one pound, but the quantity of work done varied and the reward varied accordingly. The Parable of the Talents illustrates the proposition that when ability varies, then not the absolute quantity of work done but the ratio of the achievement to the ability of the worker determines the reward. One man received five and gained five, one received two and gained two — the two were held to be equal in merit and were equally rewarded. The Parable of the Hours emphasizes the supreme value of motive as a factor in determining moral value. The small quantity of work done in a right spirit was of greater value than a large quantity done in a wrong spirit."

The first men were paid last and were paid least because they went to work in a bargaining spirit. "The householder went out early in the morning to hire laborers

and when he had agreed with them for a shilling (Am. R. V.) a day, he sent them into his vineyard." They had made a definite bargain with their employer and he naturally expected them to stand to it. But when he hired the other groups of men no bargain was made. He simply said to each group at the third hour or at the sixth hour or at the eleventh hour, " Go ye also into the vineyard and whatsoever is right I will give you."

And they went with no specific wage scale signed up in advance. They went trusting that he would indeed do " what was right." They went as Abraham went, not knowing exactly whither, but moving in the spirit of moral faith. And when their reward came they received much more in proportion to the investment of time and strength than did the men who had bargained for their reward.

The quality of motive as well as " labor-time " is noted and rated by the Master of all the higher values. The men in the parable who sold their service for so much received exactly what they bargained for — no injustice was done to them. The men who went actively to work in the spirit of trust, leaving the result to the wise judgment and honest heart of him whom they served, received vastly more in proportion to the effort expended. They were serving one who looketh not merely on the outward performance but upon the heart which holds the motive lying back of the performance. The spirit of the hireling is not the spirit which comes in for the more generous recognition at the hands of him unto whom all hearts are open.

If the main purpose of this householder had been to secure the largest possible amount of work for the expenditure of a certain amount of money, then his method in dealing with these laborers engaged at the various hours in the day for longer and shorter periods of service would have been altogether foolish. But if the main interest of

the householder like the One whom he here represents was the development of a higher type of man in his service, then the generous attention given to the question of motive and the generous reward bestowed upon right motive are abundantly justified.

"The method of the householder in treating all alike, giving to every workman a living, is that which obtains today in the foreign missionary service. The American Board," says one of the secretaries, "provides the same for all its missionaries — to each a living. The Board undertakes merely to maintain the man, to see that he has enough to live on, no more, no less. Hence in each field the salary of the new recruit and the veteran is on the same basis; the ablest leader and the ordinary workman receive alike. Their true reward is found in the joy of the employ, the success of the enterprise, in having a share, larger or less, in the common undertaking. The hero of some mission field, its pioneer, its founder, its broad-visioned, strong-willed builder, is thus in vital comradeship with an inconspicuous teacher in some school established long after the foundations were laid in his more strenuous day."

The parable was called out by Peter's question, "Lo, we have left all and followed thee. What, then, shall we have?" Peter was pluming himself on the sacrifices he had made for the coming Kingdom. He would be very grateful if the Lord would give him a bit of inside information as to the reward awaiting those who had come in on the ground floor of that service to which the Master had called them.

The very mood which prompted Peter's thrifty question would vitiate the whole service he might render unless it were corrected. In that mood Peter was not serving the Lord at all — he was simply doing a little business with

the Lord, swapping so much self-sacrifice for certain valued returns. We have left all — what shall we have then! How hardly do many men of Peter's race recover from the attitude where their eyes are solely on the main chance!

The Master's reply to Peter indicated that all such calculations were headed wrong. There would come what Mozley called "the reversal of human judgment." Many that were esteemed last would be seen to be first and the first last. The small sacrifice made in the right spirit would have more value in the eyes of him who watched both the wealthy and the widow as they cast their offerings into the treasury, than the great sacrifices made in the bargaining spirit which Peter evinced.

"The scrutiny of the last day by discovering the irrelevant material in men's goodness may reduce to a shadow much exalted earthly character. Men are made up of professions, gifts and talents and also of themselves, but all so mixed together that we cannot separate one element from another. Another day must show what the moral substance is and what is only the brightness of gifts. But if there be a reversal of human judgment for evil, there will also be reversal of it for good — the solid work which has gone on in secret under common exteriors will then spring into light and come out in a glorious aspect."

We are not competent to compare the sacrifices we make and the service we render with the service and the sacrifice of others (as Peter was undertaking to do) in order to arrive at some just appraisal of the reward in store. It is not in this mood that men may enter the vineyard of the Lord and achieve for him and for themselves those high ends he has in view. He seeks the investment of each life through love rather than for the sake of a stipulated reward. He would deal with us as sons and not as slaves, sharing with us the burden of the establishment of his Kingdom

upon the earth and sharing with us its glorious and permanent rewards.

The parable is not meant to give encouragement to the thought of making a late entrance into the vineyard of service. The men who set to work at the eleventh hour entered at the first chance which came. "Why stand ye here idle?" They were able to reply truthfully, "Because no man has hired us." The moment the gate of service opened before them they entered it with eagerness.

Why do you waste your day? Why do you waste another single hour of it if the call of service has indeed sounded in your ears? If you will hear and heed his "Go ye into the vineyard," you will find in the great outcome that "whatsoever is right" will mean to you nothing less than a choral entrance into the joy of your Lord.

LXVII

THE VARYING USE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Luke 19 : 11-27

The Parable of the Talents and the Parable of the Pounds are so much alike in form that many people have regarded them as the varying traditions of a single utterance of the Master. But the differences outweigh the resemblances. The talent was a large sum of money, the pound a very small sum. In the former parable the inequality of human endowment is emphasized, in the latter all start on an equal footing.

In the former parable each man received "according to his several ability." In the latter all received the same original endowment and the same opportunity for the exercise of that ability, but they made varying use of it. Where ability is equal, then the mere quantity of achievement will determine the relative merit. But where, as in the Parable of the Talents, the ability is unequal, then the ratio of achievement must determine the relative merit.

Here, then, are the two main lessons from each of these passages — men are judged according to their achievements in the light of the means at their disposal. Men are judged by the use they make of those similar means which are at the disposal of us all.

The particular occasion when the Parable of the Pounds was spoken is to be noted. "He spake a parable because he was nigh to Jerusalem and because they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear." Immediately! The direction their Master was taking in going

up to Jerusalem, the popular enthusiasm which attended his progress, and their own personal ambitions had led the disciples to cherish high hopes that he was about to set up his temporal kingdom at the capital city of his country. They could almost see themselves sitting at the right hand and the left hand of high privilege.

Jesus therefore told them this story about a nobleman who was about to go on a long journey into a far country. He indicated a period of time wherein men should trade with the capital given them so as to make an increase in some cases of nine hundred per cent. It would only be "after a long time" that the lord of those servants would come and reckon with them. Jesus was thus adjusting the over-anxious expectations of his eager-hearted followers to the real facts of the situation.

The nobleman called his ten servants and gave them a pound apiece all around. It was only an insignificant sum, a little over fifteen dollars in our money. The Master was teaching his disciples not to despise the day of small things. Then the nobleman said to each one, "Do business herewith till I come." He would test the fidelity and the capacity of each man by ascertaining how much he could gain during a given period "by trading."

When the day of reckoning came, it was found that the first man by the wise and active use of his powers had multiplied his original ability by ten. He was rewarded by his Master in word and in deed. "Well done, thou good servant! Thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." The scope of his opportunity for the exercise of his augmented powers is increased with the increase of the powers themselves.

The second man reported that he had multiplied his original endowment by five. His lower achievement with a similar endowment received a less hearty recognition,

but he was given authority over five cities. He was given an enlarged opportunity commensurate with the increased competence he had been able to show.

The third man came in a fearful, grudging spirit, excusing his own lack of performance by accusing the disposition of another. "I feared thee because thou art an austere man, taking up what thou didst not lay down and reaping where thou didst not sow. Here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin."

Here we have a man devoid of that quality which makes possible the ventures of faith! He was timidly and narrowly bent on not doing any harm in the world. His life was coldly negative rather than vigorously wicked. He had done nothing scandalous. He had not wasted a penny of his pound in riotous living. He had done nothing at all. He had laid himself up in fruitless inaction. In the day of judgment there he was, no more of him and no less than on the day when the lord of values had intrusted him with the same original endowment bestowed upon the man who, as a result of his policy of self-realization along the higher levels, finds himself with authority over ten cities.

In the Parable of the Talents it is the man who received the one talent rather than those who received the larger measures of ability who made no use of his chance. The man who did nothing at all for his master was the one whose share of ability was most modest. "This is the peculiar temptation of the man who has little ability and sullenly retires from a service in which he cannot outshine and play a conspicuous part. Because he cannot do as much as he would like to do, he will not do as much as he can."

How many men are depressed by the apparent insignificance of their powers! They would endow colleges and support their own missionaries in the foreign field if they were

millionaires — so they say — but they neglect those lesser deeds of love which lie within their compass. They would undertake the work of personal evangelism and strive to bring others to Christ if they were sure that they possessed as much ability along this line as Dwight L. Moody or Henry Drummond, but they are reluctant to speak the word to some neighbor which might set his life in a new attitude toward Christ! They would prophesy in Christ's name and in his name cast out devils and in his name do many wonderful works if they were only sure in advance that people would be astonished at their efforts, but they fail to bring forth that measure of good fruit appropriate to the ability given them that men might know that they are faithful disciples of the Lord.

Human life is not all level prairie like Kansas and Nebraska. It is a land of hills and of valleys. In the distribution of personal ability there are elevations and depressions as one's eye sweeps across the surface noting the varying levels of individual endowment. And these variations are as much a natural feature of the situation in human experience as in the topography of a country. It is not for the man depressed by the consciousness of his own limitations to say in surly fashion to the Giver of all good gifts, great and small, "Here is thy pound."

There comes a swift process of judgment upon willful inaction. "Take from him the pound and give it to him that hath ten pounds. To him that hath shall be given. From him that hath not shall be taken away." The law is self-executing, the process of judgment is automatic. The man who buries his talent, loses it.

How many fields of action bear their somber testimony to this principle of judgment! The unused muscle shrinks and dwindles until in place of a useful function there is only a rudimentary remnant. The fish in the Mammoth

Cave having no use for eyes in their unlighted habitat lose the power of sight. The man who disdains the ministry of beauty, of music, of religion, becomes atrophied in those powers which formerly caused him to react under the higher forms of stimulus. To him that hath, more is given. From him who uses not, even that which he had is taken away. No man need run toward his doom in order to be doomed. Let him but stand still, leaving his higher self unworked, and by that very sloth he is hastening swiftly to his doom.

"The risk of the five-talent man is his conceit; the risk of the one-talent man is his hopelessness. Why should this insignificant bubble on the great stream of life inflate itself with self-importance? But when we look at life religiously, the doctrine of the trust redeems it from insignificance. You have not much, but what you have is essential to the whole. The lighthouse-keeper on his rock sits in solitude and watches his little flame. Why does he not let it die away as other lights in the distance die when the night comes on? Because it is not his light. He is its keeper, not its owner. The great Power that watches that stormy coast has set him there and he must be true."

The inconspicuous service rendered by the man who has received but a single pound or been intrusted with a single talent is lifted at once into a higher meaning when it is viewed as a trust. And it is a tragic thing for any life to suddenly realize that having been commissioned from on high to perform a certain inconsiderable part in the fulfillment of a vast, far-reaching, divine plan, he has thrown away his chance of honor by wrapping his modest abilities in the concealment of a napkin.

If there is in the commercial world "the law of diminishing returns," there is in all the fields of human interest "the law of increasing returns." When a man has amassed

even a modest amount of working capital, he finds as he wisely invests it, that the more it grows the more easily and rapidly it grows. In the recovery of health when once the crisis is passed, surplus energy seems to be funded and the old vigor comes back in a kind of geometrical progression. When a man has written a popular book which almost everybody reads, quite everybody is ready to read the next book he puts out. To him that hath, it shall be given.

"Wherefore study to be quiet and to do your own business and to work with your own hands that ye may walk honestly and have lack of nothing." To have tried and failed brings no disgrace if one's best powers went into the high effort. But never to have tried at all is shame unspeakable. "Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

LXVIII

THE ABUSE OF HIGH PRIVILEGE

Matt. 21 : 33-46

This is a parable of warning and judgment. Its sharp finger points straight at certain well-known sins. When it was originally uttered the chief priests and the scribes felt the sting of its application. They said, "He means us." They would have laid hands on Christ forthwith had they not "feared the people."

In an unusual degree every stroke of the Master's brush in painting this picture tells its own story. The man who planted the vineyard represents the God of Israel. The vineyard itself stood for the religious privileges of the Hebrew nation. The husbandmen were the Jews themselves. The servants sent out were the prophets. The fruit expected by the lord of the vineyard was that loyal, obedient service which should grow naturally out of religious privilege. The shameful beating and wounding of the messengers sent was the rough treatment meted out by the Jews to the accredited representatives of the divine purpose. "Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute?"

The son sent at the last to these ungrateful men saw Christ. "When the fullness of time came, God sent his Son." The crucifixion, already casting its dark shadow across the Master's path, was indicated in that the wicked men "cast him forth out of the vineyard and killed him." They refused him a place in the vineyard of their religious system. They put him to death for daring to enter it

with his Messianic claims. The final giving of the vineyard to others foretells the choosing of the Gentiles for spiritual leadership and the lapse of the Jews from the right of the line which they had held so long in the religious advance of the world.

The terms are now defined — what do they teach? While the parable was directed first at the unresponsive Jews of Christ's time, it points also at the moral delinquency of all those who follow in their train repeating their sins. The fateful, tragic history of the Hebrew nation is the story of many a religiously reared man and of many a favored nation.

Here in the very forefront of our own national existence stands a rich vineyard of high religious privilege! The Lord himself has "planted a vineyard and set a hedge about it and digged a winepress in it and built a tower." The detailed preparation suggests the contrast between the painstaking, generous spirit of the lord of the vineyard and the ungrateful, rebellious conduct of the husbandmen. God has put within our reach all the necessary means for a rich return of spiritual values.

If the awful penalty pronounced in this passage fell upon the unfaithful Hebrews, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" The Jews had simply the Old Testament — we have the Old and the New in all their foretelling and fulfilling completeness. The Jews saw what Christ had been doing for three years — we see what he has been doing for nineteen hundred years. They walked within "the shadow of things to come" — we are enjoying the good things. Think not that those men who refused the claim of the Lord of the vineyard by rejecting Christ were sinners above all men! Except we repent, we shall all likewise perish.

The lord is patient — he offers these privileges and then

goes "into another country for a long time." There is a period of forbearance and suspended judgment. Pay day does not always come the following Saturday night nor are the books of the Recording Angel balanced on the first day of each month.

But patience does not mean indifference. The fact that this vineyard of privilege was intrusted to certain husbandmen is not forgotten. The lord will inquire strictly into the use made of it. "At the season he sent unto the husbandmen a servant that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard." Then another! Then yet another! Repeated demands were made for that which was due. Religious privileges are meant to produce righteousness, unselfish service, ripe and generous returns in all good living. The succession of messengers each one calling for "Fruit" indicates the divine insistence upon a proper return for the effort made on our behalf. Privilege spells responsibility.

The parable indicates in effective phrase how men are treating their opportunities. Here is a man who is angry because he is asked to give to some charity — he "beats" the request! Here is one who is indignant that any one should speak to him personally about the duty of repentance and faith toward God — he handles that appeal "shamefully" and sends it away "empty." Here is another who, closely urged to enter upon the life of Christian devotion, "wounds" the one who made the appeal. He utters an ill-bred refusal and "casts him forth." The hardness of men's hearts becomes perplexing — "The Lord of the vineyard says, What shall I do?"

He decides to make his supreme appeal — "I will send my beloved Son." One comes who can say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He can say, "No man knoweth the Father but the Son and he to whom the

Son will reveal him." This supreme manifestation of the divine concern on man's behalf will surely touch the human heart. It was a natural expectation which uttered itself — "They will reverence my Son."

But moral disobedience had become chronic. Hardening their hearts against the minor appeals of duty had calloused the whole moral nature. The parable records "an ascending scale of atrocities," for wrongdoing is cumulative. When a man does one evil deed, it becomes easier to do the next one. When a boy has stolen a nickel, he has removed one of the barriers between his conscience and the act of stealing the larger sum. When a soul resists the appeal of the Spirit once, he may be sure that the next appeal will not be so strongly felt.

There is a certain fearful fascination about the psychology of one's course in wrongdoing. There is a certain enlargement of dominant traits and a tendency to fixity in character. The harsh treatment given the subordinate servants paved the way for the ultimate slaying of the Son. The wicked husbandmen had been doing wrong until murder itself seemed natural and easy.

We are amazed at the shortsighted, impotent chain of reasoning into which those men fell in that moral blindness induced by persistent disobedience. They said when the lord of the vineyard sent to them his son: "This is the heir! Let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours. And they cast him forth out of the vineyard and killed him."

There are men who actually think that when they have numbed the spiritual sense by disobedience or disuse, they are entirely relieved from the disturbing sense of religious obligation. If they have silenced for an hour the voice of the Spirit, they feel quite free to go cheerily about their affairs in open ungodliness. They vainly imagine that

if the Bibles were all burned up, and all preaching of the gospel were stopped, they would feel serene.

But back of all Bibles and sermons, back of all personal entreaty and spiritual appeal, is God himself who has to be reckoned with. However we may temporarily hide our heads in the sand, we must finally stand before him to give an account of the deeds done in the body whether they be good or bad. The Lord of the vineyard will show what fruit we have returned him by our use of the privilege accorded us. He will make manifest the attitude we have taken toward his Son. And if we have indeed " cast him out " of our lives, we shall find ourselves cast out.

The problem of privilege along many lines is a vital one. The wealth of the world is in the hands of a small percentage of the entire population. How will they treat the appeal coming up from the plain people and coming down from God who is no respecter of persons? How will they meet the demands for a more democratic spirit in the control of the great industries, for a more equitable division of the good things created by the joint efforts of brain and brawn, for a more intelligent and conscientious regard for the human values at stake in this huge business of producing wealth?

If these men of privilege " beat " that appeal, if they " treat shamefully " the gropings of the common people after a life more worthy to be called human, if they " cast out " the protests made against conditions intolerable to the awakened self-respect of the toilers, they may know of a surety that they will hasten the day when their rich vineyard of privilege will be " taken away from them " and be given over to husbandmen possessed of that social habit of mind which will render the lord of the finer values the fruit he demands.

The cultured men and women who have enjoyed the

benefits of college training stand in a fair garden of privilege What will they do with it? If the fortunate individual stands aloof from the exacting demands of the common life, pluming himself on his own admirable qualities and scorning the "unwashed," let him know that he too is in peril. The debt of privilege, whatever form it may take, must be paid in coin of the realm. And the only coin acceptable in the discharge of that obligation is to be found in those forms of service where the man gives not his gift alone but himself as well.

This principle lay at the foundation of the life of Jesus. He was rich in personal endowment and in high privilege, yet for our sakes he became poor that by his self-sacrifice many might be enriched. Knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, he girded himself and washed the disciples' feet. This underlying principle of spiritual advance is a stone which many builders have rejected, but in the rightly ordered life it becomes the head of the corner.

LXIX

THE DOOM OF THE UNFIT

Matt. 22 : 1-14

Here in these chapters we find a succession of " Parables of Judgment." The fateful events which prefaced Calvary were near. The blindness of the Jewish people which led them to reject those principles which have become the head of the corner in the spiritual structure they were set to rear became more and more evident. And these successive warnings are like the solemn striking of the clock at midnight when Macbeth was plotting the murder of the king — a warning which that guilty man also failed to heed.

The divine offer of mercy was like the action of a king who made a marriage feast for his son. He sent his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage, but the invited guests insolently refused to come. He sent yet other servants, humbling himself to the point of extolling the quality of the entertainment provided that reluctant guests might be induced to come. " Oxen and fatlings are killed and all things are ready — come to the marriage feast."

" But they made light of it " — they treated it as a matter of no consequence. One man busied himself on his farm and another in his store and others laid hold of the servants who had brought the added summons and treated them shamefully. The preoccupation with lesser things blinded these men to the supreme importance of the one vital interest in that situation.

"As it was then, so it is now. One man goes to his farm, preoccupied by his daily care. Another is the slave of his business. A third finds the king's summons inconsistent with his own mean desires and will not even listen to the messenger — he lays hold on him and kills him. The preoccupation of the mind by routine, the overwhelming pressure of one's business and the conscious inconsistency of one's own way of life with the way of God — these three habits of mind still make light of the king's message. Possession goes its way to its farm; commercialism hides among its merchandise and conscious unworthiness hates the very reminder of God's intention and strikes God's messengers dead at its feet."

This insolent action was resented by the king. He "was wroth. He sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned their city." The parable of warning was addressed primarily to the Jews and as the solemn words fell from the lips of the Messiah they were rejecting, they might have heard the mutterings of a coming storm of divine judgment. The overthrow of Jerusalem, with all the attendant horrors of outrage, slaughter and burning, was already on the way. Truly his blood was to be upon them and upon their children!

The teaching of the parable thus far runs parallel with the similar parable of "The Great Supper," recorded in Luke. There also the invited guests showed themselves heedless of the generous good will of the One who had bidden them to a feast. "They all with one consent began to make excuse," one begging off that he might view a piece of land he had bought, another pleading an engagement to try a yoke of oxen he had purchased and a third insisting that his wife had prior claims upon his time, preventing his attendance at the feast.

But at this point this parable takes another direction and

introduces another aspect of the great truth Jesus was teaching that privileged nation. "They that were bidden were not worthy" — therefore the king sent his servants into the highways, directing them to bring all they found without regard to their moral antecedents, "both bad and good," that the wedding might be furnished with guests.

There was a generous response to this sweeping invitation. When the king came in, the place was "filled with guests." But "he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment." This man had been willing to come but was unwilling to make himself fit to remain when he got there. "Promiscuous affair," he said to himself in act if not in word. "Hardly worth while to don my best." He came "as he was," holding cheaply the invitation received.

We need not resort to any pleasant fiction about the custom of Oriental monarchs in furnishing every invited guest with an appropriate garment when he is to appear at court. Let that be as it may — it is not a rigid rule! The point brought out in the parable is that a man may appear to accept an invitation and yet offer an open insult to his host by his unwillingness to make that appropriate preparation for the event which lies within his power.

There are many who are eager for opportunities of all sorts, but they lack the readiness to make themselves competent and worthy to enjoy the opportunities when they come. Here is a family in a narrow tenement clamoring for a bath tub and then using it presently as a convenient place to dump the next month's coal! Here are workmen loudly insistent on shorter hours of employ and then spending the added leisure in the rum shop, wasting their wages and lessening their efficiency for further employ! Here is a labor organization peremptorily claiming recognition and

participation in the management of a business and then once accorded those privileges showing itself unreasonable and tyrannical in its ill-founded demands! "Bidden but unworthy." Reaching for opportunities but unwilling to show themselves competent to rightly use them.

The fault is not confined to one social class. Here are those whose material affluence and intellectual advantages easily entitle them to seats at the feast of life, but they fail to robe their minds and hearts in those high qualities which would make them fit to remain in that place of privilege! Here are those who by birth and breeding enjoy a social position which opens before them many a door of splendid opportunity, yet they stalk in without gracious demeanor, lacking that fine consideration for the feelings of others which is the wedding garment of all human contact.

The right to any pleasure or privilege has to be earned by an acquired fitness to enjoy it. The invitation in the parable was to a wedding feast and the teaching may not unfitly be applied to the sacred joys of wedded life. The parable says to every young man, "Earn your right to be married." Earn it physically! No young fellow has the right to bring the taint of vicious disease or the scars of debauchery to mate on equal terms with purity and honor. Whether the girl knows it or not, he will know — and if he is offering her ashes for beauty, he will feel like a whelp. He will stand at the marriage altar with a sense of shame, condemned by his own sense of honor. Earn your right to mate on equal terms with honor and purity.

Earn your right to be married financially! If the girl has sense enough to be worth marrying at all, she does not expect to begin her housekeeping on the scale where her mother leaves off, or to have you as prosperous at the beginning of your career as her father is at the end of his. She is ready to share in the struggle and to enjoy the suc-

cess which will come all the more because she helped win it. Even so, it is unmanly to take a girl out of her father's home unless you have earned a reasonable prospect of being able to provide for her comfort.

Earn your right to be married morally! Blessed be God for the faith and hope and love of those good women who cling to unworthy men and finally lift them up by the sheer strength of their unselfish devotion! But it is a shabby trick to willingly impose that burden upon the heart of any woman. Offer the girl, not a victim to be reformed, but a husband to be enjoyed. Offer her, not a problem, but a man. When you make bold to sit down at the feast of married life, see to it that in your own preparedness of body, brain and heart you are robed in wedding raiment.

Marriage is the Matterhorn in the mountain range of earthly privilege. It is for the elect to show those high qualities which enable them to make the ascent and to stand unabashed at the pinnacle of earthly happiness. It is for them to be arrayed in those moods which serve to lift that whole sacred interest to the highest level of thought and feeling. Then the wedding feast will be rightly enjoyed by those who are rightly arrayed in the purposes and methods which make for happiness and well-being in the most fundamental of all human institutions.

There are men and women who jauntily take their places at the Lord's table without that inward and personal preparation which alone entitles us to sit at that board of privilege. The invitations to the Lord's table are issued, not to angels, but to human beings; not to perfection, but to the sense of need. Even so, unless we "do truly and earnestly repent of our sins" (to quote from the Prayer-Book) "and are in love and charity with our neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the

commandments of God and walking in his holy ways," we had best make further preparation for our appearance at that Communion Feast by seeking that inward fitness here symbolized by the wedding garment.

"Many are called but few are chosen." The words have an ominous sound. But the warning is one to be heard and heeded. Interpret them as we may in our light-hearted optimism, it is impossible to make "few" mean everybody or even an overwhelming majority. Let him that thinketh he has succeeded take heed lest he fail!

LXX

A DAY OF QUESTIONS

Matt. 22 : 15-22

The Master always carried an interrogation point with him. It was an effective weapon to puncture the swollen bags of conceit and pretense he encountered. When the chief priests pressed him for his credentials, saying, "By what authority doest thou these things?" he silenced them with a shrewd question. "I also will ask you one question — The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men?" They were afraid to say "of heaven" lest he should reply, "Why, then, did ye not believe on him?" They were afraid to say, "of men," because they feared the people who counted John as a prophet. They immediately slunk away in defeat.

Jesus first appears before us at the age of twelve "sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers." He learned to use the interrogation point in early life.

And he has been asking questions ever since. What wide and effective use he made of this form of teaching! "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" "What man is there of you whom if his son ask bread will he give him a stone?" "Whom do men say that I am?" "Why callest thou me good?" "If ye love them that love you, what do ye more than others?" "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me?" "Can the children of the bride-chamber fast while the

bridegroom is with them?" "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?"

He knew the power of the question to open up the mind to a fresh consideration of the truth. He knew the power of the question to show the utter absurdity of a suggested alternative to some proposition. He knew the power of a question to make vivid some truth which might have less edge if uttered in a direct affirmative.

He also encountered a perfect fire of questions. His enemies knew the ugly power of an insinuating question which intimates what the questioner dares not state openly. His enemies used those questions which were meant to put him in an awkward dilemma. When a political speaker had been repeatedly interrupted by a questioner from the crowd who always demanded a plain "Yes," or "No," insisting that any honest man could answer a straight question one way or the other, he retorted upon the disturber in this effective fashion: "I will ask you a straight question. Answer me, Yes or No. Have you stopped beating your wife yet?"

Some of the finest passages in Christ's teaching were called out by questions. The lawyer asked, "Who is my neighbor?" and the Parable of the Good Samaritan was the Master's reply. The people asked, "Art thou He that should come?" and that effective list of achievements came in his answer — "The blind receive sight, the deaf hear, the lepers are cleansed, the lame walk and the poor have good tidings preached to them." Peter asked him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" and the Master answered in that passage touching forgiveness which has become a classic on the quality of mercy.

The Master went straight along both asking and answer-

ing questions. The child coming into the world feeling that he has everything to learn keeps up a steady and sometimes wearisome flow of inquiry. The Master, possessed of the simple, childlike quality of mind which moves straight for the point, understood and valued the power of the question in the furtherance of knowledge.

We find him in this passage within the Temple inclosure with his back to the wall contending with his enemies. The various parties at Jerusalem, the Herodians, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, were all arrayed against him in hostile mood. The Pharisees with the Herodians "took counsel how they might ensnare him in his talk." They said to him in fawning insincerity, "Master, we know that thou art true and teachest the way of God in truth and regardest not the person of men. Tell us, Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?"

They were seeking in wily fashion to impale him upon one of the two horns of a dilemma. If he forbade tribute to Cæsar the Herodians as supporters of the existing *régime* would accuse him to the Roman authorities as one who incited rebellion. They would thus array the government against him. If he recommended the payment of the hated tribute to the Roman government, the Pharisees as representatives of the rabid Jewish party would array the people against him as a disloyal son of Abraham.

How wise he was! He "perceived their wickedness." He said to them: "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money." When they produced a penny he said, "Whose image and superscription?" They said, "Cæsar's." Then he said to them, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's." And the wise men in Church and State ponder the validity of that statement of principle to this hour.

Here is the same principle stated by one who closely followed Jesus! "Tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." There are duties perpendicular and duties horizontal and one duty differeth from another duty in its direction.

"Whose image and superscription? Only one answer was possible — the tokens on the coin showed what gave it value and made it current," says A. E. Dunning. "Amplify these words of Jesus. You use that coin to buy what you want. You accept the protection and enjoy the advantages of the civil government. Then pay your share of the cost. This is your plain duty.

"Here, then, is our lesson: we must find out what our obligations are and to whom they are owed, then meet them as honest men. Are you a partner in the civil state? Do you walk its streets, ride over its roads, live safely under the protection of its police, do business under its laws? Then pay your share as an honest partner, both in money and service. Treat your church in the same way."

Then came the third party, the Sadducees, with another type of question that they might catch him in his talk. The Sadducees represented a violent reaction against the material conception of the future life which was current. They had reacted so far by raising social and physical objections regarding the hope of a future life as to deny the claim of immortality altogether.

The Pharisees so far shared in the material conception of the future world as to believe that the faithful would have wives and children in Paradise — an idea which the Moslems share to this day. And in opposition to this view the Sadducees brought forward a fictitious case where a man married a wife and upon his decease his brother

married her, and upon the decease of the second yet another brother married her until every one of the seven brothers in that family had been married to this one woman. The Sadducees brought this question as a kind of poser — "In the resurrection whose wife shall she be?"

The Master had a way of cutting the knot of any quibble rather than seeking patiently to disentangle confusion deliberately created by mental perversity. He did not weigh the respective claims of these seven men who in the fairy tale brought by the objectors had all sustained marital relations with the same woman. "Ye do err," he said, "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God! In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are as the angels of God."

The point is that the physical necessity for such relations as are sustained in the married state for the perpetuation of the race do not exist in the unseen world. There being no more death there is no further need of the renewal of the race through the relations honorably sustained in marriage. The statement of Jesus does not imply that human affections cultivated and fostered by wedded life on earth may not have their perfecting in the future world.

The Sadducees in undertaking to ridicule the doctrine of a future life and to deny the validity of such a hope by suggesting imaginary complications arising out of earthly relationships were showing that they neither understood aright the prophetic inheritance of their own race nor appreciated the power of God who is able to order the relations of that future world in such manner as to satisfy all the legitimate expectations of both intelligence and affection. "Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."

"Have ye not read that God said, I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."

This was one of the commonplaces of their religious speech. Jesus indicated that in this oft-quoted phrase they were steadily testifying to their faith in a future life. When those words were uttered by the Lord, the three men named had been a long time dead. Now God is not the God of dead persons but of living persons. The affirmation which the Sadducees accepted and cited carried with it therefore the implication that Abraham and Isaac and Jacob were still in existence.

Science makes its advance by asking questions. It asks for knowledge touching some problem and makes a tentative reply to its own question in what is called "a hypothesis." It then seeks by competent investigation to either verify or discredit that hypothesis by positive knowledge. This way progress lies. Religion may utilize the same inductive method, for the Master of men and of methods went about "asking and answering questions."

LXXI

THE NEED OF RESERVE FORCE

Matt. 25 : 1-13

There is a tender pathos in this story. The scene is a wedding feast, bright and joyous. The interest centers in ten maidens, chosen, as bridesmaids commonly are, because they were young and fair. And to that situation came the straight call of duty.

When it came some were prepared for it — "they that were ready went in to the marriage." Some were unprepared and because of that fact they were shut out. The ten maidens had all made some preparation. They were present at the place where they were to render a certain service. They had on their wedding garments. They had brought their lamps with them and had them lighted. But five of them had not made sufficient preparation. They had not provided an adequate supply of oil in their vessels to replenish their lamps and when the cry came at midnight: "Behold the bridegroom! Go ye out to meet him," their lamps were already going out.

The extra supply of oil which the wise had provided in the vessels they carried with them stands for that reserve force in the inner life rendering it competent and adequate for the calls of duty which ring out along life's pathway. The testing which goes on under these successive calls of obligation draws the line of demarcation between the wise and the foolish. The wise have taken pains to develop fitness and adequacy for the tasks awaiting them; the foolish have made no such provision. And

as a result some go in to the feast of life and some are shut out.

The call of duty is an echo of the voice of God. Moral obligations are not mere conventional notions which have somehow gotten into our heads. They are not solely matters between a man and his fellows. They have their sanctions on high, reaching up into that moral order whose line is gone out into all the world. They are joints and sections of an eternal purpose set for the achievement of definite moral ends. It was no mere fleeting occasion which here uttered the summons — it was the voice of the Eternal, saying to those who had been appointed to a definite service: "Behold your duty! Go ye out and meet it."

The chief difference in people lies not in the fact that some are sincere and some are hypocrites. The conscious, deliberate hypocrites are few. The main difference lies in the fact that some people take the call of duty seriously and devote themselves in thoroughgoing fashion to the task of becoming adequate to its demands, while others take it lightly and carelessly. The foolish virgins did nothing wicked — they did not stone the wedding procession or insult the bride or steal the refreshments. They simply failed to make adequate preparation for doing their duty — they were sent to be light-bearers, but when the hour struck their lamps were dark for lack of oil.

The highest duty in life is to fit one's self to meet the legitimate demands of any situation where he may be called to act. The unstudied, generous impulse may flame up and burn beautifully for an hour, but its lamp is liable to go out for lack of sustaining oil. It is only well-grounded character, rooted in principle and conviction, which can be relied upon to burn until midnight — and if need be on through the small, hard hours until day dawns.

They used to say of the Duke of Wellington, "He does

his duty as naturally as a horse eats oats." It was a splendid tribute. The habit of fidelity gave to his very features the look of command and to his words the fine accent of authority. But to show that high quality the Duke had to begin his work of preparation a long time before he reached the war which culminated in victory at Waterloo. He had to have his lamp of moral energy fed perpetually from a source unfailing.

The largest lamp soon burns out unless its bowl is replenished. The strongest life is doomed to failure unless it be restocked with motive, stimulus and spiritual stamina during those long, hard hours which lead up to some midnight in the soul. The ancient prophet in his vision saw a golden lamp burning brightly through all the long hours because on either side of it there was a live olive tree feeding its oil steadily into the bowl of the lamp. In like fashion the man who would show evenly Christ's spirit and do steadily Christ's work and advance steadily in Christ's Kingdom, must stand in such relation to the living God as to have his inner life perpetually renewed from the Infinite Source of life.

The unexpectedness of the summons — it came "at midnight" — is emphasized because that entered into the result. It always enters. You may be moving quietly upon your way when some unlooked-for crisis makes a supreme demand. The young fellow at college finds himself suddenly injected into a group of students who are the foes of sobriety, clean living, intellectual achievement. The business man finds himself in a situation where a lie or a dishonest trick will secure an immediate advantage for his enterprise. The man with a Christian inheritance and training finds himself unexpectedly in a situation where the tide sets strongly against honest faith and godly living — he is sorely tempted to drift with the current.

In these situations hundreds of men go down in moral defeat. They have no reserves. They have a bit of oil in their moral lamps but no vessels at hand to replenish them when the period of temptation to barter away the higher for the lower is protracted. They might have had — they had been repeatedly urged to make their moral resources adequate to the demands which were sure to come, but they had neglected it. Now when the hour strikes and the call comes, "Behold your duty — Go ye out to meet it," their strength fails and they slink away in moral darkness.

The hard test may come in some personal crisis. Your health may fail, compelling you to face a life of inactivity and invalidism. You may meet with business reverses and feel tempted to fling away principle and perhaps life itself. Death may enter your home, blotting all the light out of your sky even though the sun shines elsewhere. In the face of that hard situation there comes a call for patience and heroism, for fidelity and steadfastness. Alas for you, if you find that the lamp which ought to be burning with a steady flame is going out! If that hour finds your mind without faith, your heart without grace, your will not reenforced by its sense of harmony with the divine will, the crisis will spell defeat.

The call of duty comes to all college-trained men and women these days in the form of a demand for intellectual seriousness, honesty and efficiency. We live in the twentieth century, and if we listened only to the orators without looking at the facts, we might fancy that the sunlight of intelligence was shining everywhere.

It is not so. In the face of all the humbug and delusion, superstition and dogmatism in modern life there is sore need of the high qualities named above. The plain facts of physiology, hygiene and sanitary science are tossed out of

the window almost contemptuously on the strength of some flighty bit of sentiment. Multitudes of men are hurried away into the swamp in pursuit of some political or economic will-o'-the-wisp whose unreality has been demonstrated by wide and instructive areas of actual experience. Nostrums and patent medicines of all sorts, physical, mental, industrial, political, are being swallowed wholesale to the detriment of our personal and corporate well-being. Poor dumb fools are still butting their brains out upon the moral corner-stones of the universe in the vain supposition that, after all, the way of the transgressor may not prove hard.

Spiritual adequacy is a purely personal matter as Jesus here portrayed it. "Give us of your oil," the foolish said to the wise, "for our lamps are going out." Why not? Why should not the prudent generously share their resources with their less fortunate sisters? They could not. That for which the oil stands is not transferable. It cannot be handed about from one life to another in the time of crises because the oil stands for that accumulation of moral reserve which belongs to well-developed personal character.

The parable rings true. The very nature of the case, the God of things as they are, is forever saying to the foolish who would borrow from their friends to supply their own deficiences: "Not so! Go and buy for yourselves! Moral adequacy to the demands made by recurring duty must be attained by each one for himself." The father of the reckless, dissolute, headstrong boy would be glad to share his own sobriety, integrity and love of hard work with the young fellow, but he cannot. The son must gain those needed qualities for himself.

The highest happiness in life comes in making one's self adequate to meet the calls of duty as they come.

The very achievement of that result is a wedding-feast in itself — it is the marriage of aspiration with realization. Turn again to the Representative Man! See him praying among the olive trees the night he was betrayed! See his pitying eyes upon those trembling disciples who hesitate between loyalty and flight! See him, the holiest being who ever walked the earth, facing the necessity of dying like a criminal on the Cross! The situation seemed to lack all the elements of joy — it was the very irony of fate.

But when he speaks to the Father, he says, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do and now come I to thee." When he speaks to his disciples he says, "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full." The joy of duty prepared for and well done lifted him beyond the reach of every earthly enemy.

BOOK IV

THE LIFE ETERNAL

LXXII

WHAT SHALL I DO TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?

Mark 10 : 17-31

Here was a man who had been steadily choosing honesty rather than fraud, truth rather than falsehood, purity rather than lust! He had kept the commandments from his youth up. Yet straight, clean, respectable though he was, there was an unrest, a dissatisfaction, a yearning in his heart for something more.

It was this yearning which prompted him to come to Christ with his straightforward question: "What lack I yet? What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" His heart was restless because it had not learned to rest in Him.

He was not a man to be lightly esteemed — when Jesus looked upon him he loved him — and what Jesus loves we may. He represents a type of man very common in good society. When we have checked off the scamps and rascals, sometimes found in dress suits as well as in shirt sleeves; when we have cast out the two-faced sneaks who show one side of their natures in decent society and another side in the darkness of guilty indulgence, there remains a vast number of just, clean, respectable men. Yet in their hearts too there is the same unrest and longing. If each one were as outspoken as this well-to-do young man, he might say, "What lack I yet?" He would recognize the fact that there is something higher and holier in human experience which he has not achieved.

What did Jesus say to the man who stands before us as

a type of that entire class? He said three things: First, there is a vital defect in this formal righteousness — "One thing thou lackest." The glad spontaneity of the child of God who is about his Father's business because of his joyous sense of the filial relation he sustains was wanting. Second, the spirit of service must be inwrought with the habit of moral respectability — "Sell and give." Third, the new experience must root down into personal fellowship with Christ — "Follow me." Let me develop these three points in the passage in order.

The formal rule-keeping righteousness which the rich young man exhibited was too largely negative. A man may keep his life free from the sins of idolatry and profanity, murder and adultery, stealing and lying, and yet be far from the Kingdom of God. He may do all this in a mood thoroughly selfish. He may be inspired by personal prudence to avoid these coarser vices. He may do all this and yet show himself sadly lacking in sympathy, in affection, in the habit of kindly usefulness. You can think of men who are coldly correct in all the outward moralities and yet constantly repellent by their lack of heart. Except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees — both in quality and in quantity — we shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

The formal rule-keeping righteousness also lacks warmth and zest. You cannot fire the hearts of men with enthusiasm over a moral program which reads like a page from a book on etiquette. To arouse the moral nature to do its best there must be great aims, splendid ideals, far-reaching purposes — nay, more, there must be the sense of devotion to some personal object. The Word must be made flesh if it is to dwell among us full of grace and truth, competent to impart fresh stores of spiritual life.

When Jesus said to the young man, "Why callest thou me good?" he was not disclaiming the title. He was indicating that it was not a title to be lightly used. He would have the young ruler delve down to a deeper conception of goodness — he had not gotten beyond the external observance of the law of moral respectability. He had not provided in his moral program for those personal and emotional elements which must quicken the coldly ethical if we are to grow up into anything worthy to be called "eternal life." "One thing thou lackest" — the glad spontaneity of the man who lives in the filial spirit as a child of the Eternal.

The rich young man was told further to "sell and give." He had never coupled the two words together in just that way. Other combinations are more in evidence. "Sell and get" — receiving more than one yields in his bargains will make a man prosperous. "Sell and spend" — this will open the way to glorious self-indulgence. But "sell and give" is calculated to induce the spirit of service.

Convert your holdings into usings! Make what you own an instrument of service. It applies to much more than the property one holds. Your intelligence, your culture, your social facility, your affections, your leisure — make them all instruments of service. Sell and give from all these assets of yours.

In a church I once served there was a man of large interests and high civic position, a university man well read and widely traveled, who agreed for a time to teach a class of high-school boys in the Sunday school. He taught them the lesson for the day, but he also gave them counsel, inspiration, enrichment out of his own more abundant life. The boys counted it one of the greatest privileges which had come to them just to know the man in that more intimate way — they talk about it to this day.

There came to each one of those boys a kindling of interest, the awakening of a higher ambition, the strengthening of nobler purpose, an enlargement of personal experience. It was good for the boys and good for the man to thus impart himself. He had learned to "sell and give," for that which has enriched one life may be made to enrich others.

This mode of life had best root down into personal fellowship with Christ, for the Master's last word to the young ruler was, "Follow me." The reason is plain — it is the person of Christ rather than the moral demands of the Ten Commandments or even the more searching ideals of the Sermon on the Mount which has made Christianity great, enduring and effective.

It was a wise college president who said recently: "The cause of Christ has been criticised by its enemies and caricatured by its friends. The truth has sometimes fossilized in the minds of the aged and been prematurely forced upon the lips of undeveloped children. It has been mingled with all manner of exploded superstitions, false philosophy, science that is not so and history that never happened. It has been obscured under absurd rites, buried beneath incredible creeds, discredited by sentimentalists, evaporated by mystics, monopolized by narrow ecclesiastics. But in spite of all these grave clothes which unbelieving disciples have tried to wrap around it, it has lived and does live and will live, holding the keys of eternal life."

The great vital, heart-renewing and soul-inspiring constant through all these outward changes in current Christianity has been the spirit of Jesus Christ as he stands revealed on the pages of history at the time of his coming and as he stands revealed on all the pages of Christian history since that high hour. And because he knew that this would be the main source of strength in the estab-

lishment of the Kingdom he proclaimed, it was inevitable that he should exalt the significance of personal fellowship with himself. His great word was: "Follow me! Abide in me!"

This the young man lacked. He had morality — he had kept the Commandments from his youth. He had earnestness — he ran to Christ and kneeled to him in making his appeal. He had courtesy — he addressed him as "Good Master." He had capacity for that finer quality, of life which Jesus came to manifest and to impart. And for all this Jesus, as he looked upon him, loved him. But when he was brought face to face with the highest, he flinched. "His countenance fell at the saying and he went away sorrowful." The quest of the best was not for him.

In the city of Dresden there hangs a canvas of Hofmann which has been widely reproduced in photograph. The artist has painted with wondrous skill the look of tender interest, of sympathy and of disappointment which swept across the face of Christ when this young man refused the call of the highest.

Many right choices he had already made, but now when it came to a supreme choice between selfishness and service, between following his own respectable pleasures and following Christ, he failed. The highest he had ever seen was offered and declined. Thus when the curtain falls in the Scripture narrative, the young man is faced away from his Saviour and Lord. And when the curtain falls for each one of us, the last curtain on the last act closing up the life on earth, will it leave us faced away from him, refusing the best he offers, or will it leave us faced toward him in glad acceptance and unending aspiration?

The incident made a profound impression upon the disciples. Jesus saw the eager interest written upon their

faces as he "looked round about." He remarked, not harshly but sympathetically, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God." The disciples were "amazed at his words," for to the Jewish mind the possession of great riches seemed indicative of the favor of God. Then Jesus put it even more strongly in that startling paradox, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God."

We are not to juggle with these words by fanciful references to some small side gate in the wall of Jerusalem called "The Needle's Eye," where the camel must kneel and divest himself of his pack to pass through. Let the words stand in their rugged paradoxical boldness. It was the Oriental way of saying that to devote large possessions to Christian ends and to administer large fortunes in a thoroughly Christian spirit is a work of gigantic difficulty. And every conscientious rich man finds that it is so. With men unaided it would be impossible, but with God even that measure of spiritual achievement is possible.

LXXIII

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE GREAT?

Mark 10 : 32-45

Here was a little procession headed for Jerusalem! "They were in the way going up to Jerusalem — and Jesus was going before them." The Master and his friends as they toiled along were only a few yards apart, speaking after the manner of men, but in moral feeling there was a continent between them. They were widely removed not in miles but in moods. When he turned about at the petty demand made by two of them and looked back from the spiritual level where he stood, he could scarcely see them.

They were going up to Jerusalem! They but dimly understood the significance of that far off-goal. Yet they must have felt something unwonted on that fateful journey. We read that the disciples "were amazed and they that followed were afraid." His bearing, the deeper lines in his face, his evident brooding over the mighty issues of this journey to Jerusalem, had served to impress them with the sense of something ominous.

Then the Master swiftly outlined to their wondering minds the program of experience which lay ahead. "He took the Twelve and began to tell them what things should happen unto him! Behold, we go up to Jerusalem! The Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests" — the human at the mercy of a blind ecclesiasticism. "They shall condemn him. They shall mock him and scourge him. They shall spit upon him. They shall kill him." The cumulative effect of these successive statements as to

the shame and the pain which awaited him at the hands of evil was calculated to induce a new mood in the hearts of those rough men. If any man among them ventures to open his lips now it will be to utter something high and fine.

Alas, no! Has he been so long time with them and yet have they not known him! They show themselves incompetent to follow in his train even afar off. Their souls were out of drawing in that their minds were still self-centered. "James and John came to him saying, Grant us that we may sit one on thy right hand and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory."

The desire for distinction is deep-rooted and universal. Whether it is Napoleon on horseback, bent upon the military mastery of all Europe, or Simeon Stylites on his pillar eagerly enjoying the crowds of wondering admirers attracted by the fame of his self-denial, the passion for distinction asserts its power. Here in that hour when momentous events in the moral history of the world were just emerging above the horizon, two of the inner circle of the Master's disciples were all intent upon the little axes they had to grind.

It was a big, bold, brusque demand they made. In their uninstructed minds the glory and the grandeur of life was to be found in climbing up where one could sit on the right hand of power. They had yet to learn that true glory lies in the readiness to stoop down and serve with that efficiency which springs alone from complete self-devotement. How callow they were!

And to sit at his right hand or his left was not what they imagined. Were they indeed ready to be thus intimately associated with him in the high tasks of the Kingdom. "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink? Can ye be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" He

is indicating in vivid phrase that to be "next to him" in the establishment of his Kingdom means to share in all the perils and sacrifices of that spiritual undertaking. They were clamoring for glory — he throws them back upon themselves by his inquiry as to whether their fortitude and devotion were commensurate with the high positions they sought.

Can ye drink of the cup? Can ye be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with? With the glad confidence of youthful inexperience they bravely retorted, "We can." It was what Newman called "The Venture of Faith." Their untested purposes ran out eagerly, not knowing whither they went. Their confident acceptance of his challenge does them honor, but when the hard test came they flinched.

Jesus assured them that they would indeed share in his sufferings, but to sit on his right hand or on his left was not his to give. "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." In some earthly kingdom preferment might be bestowed arbitrarily by personal favor. In his Kingdom inward fitness rather than personal influence would determine the award.

"When the ten heard it they began to be much displeased with James and John." Two were full of personal ambition and ten were filled with personal resentment lest the ambitions of the favored two should be accomplished. How self-centered they all were even in the face of the announcement made regarding the tragic ending of their Master's career! Self-assertion on his right hand and carping jealousy on the left — with what untempered mortar was he compelled to lay the foundations of the coming Kingdom!

Then Jesus proceeded to define the nature of true greatness. How strangely have the current estimates of men at

this point run counter to his! There was a time when every one said, "The great man is the fighter." Each man was measured by the length and the strength of his sword. Saul was made king of Israel because he stood head and shoulders above his fellows, a big, strapping, successful fighter. In Japan the ancient aristocracy, the Samurai, was made up entirely from the military class. In mediæval Europe the plumed knight and the helmetted warrior were held in highest esteem.

But that mood is passing. The swords will be slowly but surely beaten into plowshares. The bright metal of the nation's best manhood must be shaped into productive rather than into destructive forms. When the people of France were deciding by popular vote a few years since who was the greatest Frenchman in history, the largest number of ballots did not go to Napoleon, the man of battles, who destroyed the lives of a million men — the largest number went to Pasteur, the man of science, who in his laboratory laid the foundations for saving the lives of untold millions. Man at his best is not a fighter.

The military type of civilization is everywhere being superseded by the commercial. There are many who would say that the greatest man is the one who produces and accumulates the largest amount of money, provided only that he does it honestly. It is a more splendid thing in the eyes of aspiring youth to be a captain of industry than a captain of infantry. Men are being measured today, not by yardsticks and not by the length of their swords, but the size of their "rolls" of banknotes.

But that mood also is passing. We cannot measure the dimensions of a man with a banknote. We cannot tell "how much a man is worth" by looking in the assessor's book or in Bradstreet. We can only tell how much the things which he owns are worth. The worth of the man is

quite another matter. And the greatest man is not the one who owns the largest number of things, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things that he possesses.

There are those who say that the greatest man is the thinker. The military type of civilization gives way to the commercial, and commercial interests are in turn overshadowed by the intellectual. The true measure of a man is to be found, it is asserted, in the curious gray convolutions of the brain. The man of insight and judgment, the man of outlook and discrimination, the man of original and creative ability in the realm of knowledge — here surely we find man at his best! Here certainly is the type of excellence which is entitled to its seat at the right hand of power.

We have crystallized that estimate into proverbs: "Knowledge is power." "The world belongs to the man who knows." "Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom and with all thy getting, get understanding." The world is laying a generous tribute of its admiration and of its treasure at the feet of expert knowledge. The Church and the Hospital are sometimes almost forgotten by the rich in their eager desire to endow and equip great universities and to house huge libraries of books.

The Master of the higher values passed by all these imperfect conceptions of greatness. "Ye know that among the Gentiles the great ones exercise lordship and dominion. It shall not be so among you. If any man would be great among you let him serve! The greatest of all is the servant of all."

Usefulness is greatness. There is no other greatness worthy of the name. The greatest man in any group, in any community, in any nation, is the one who most worthily and acceptably serves the deeper interests and permanent

well-being of his fellows. How would you define man at his best? Ideally he is a servant. At his best man serves. This is what the Perfect Man said: "I am among you as One who serves." This is what the Perfect Man did: "He took upon himself the form of a servant," and became obedient to the exacting demands of the most august form of service. Wherefore God has highly exalted him until his name is above every name.

The fighter with his sword and the money-maker with his roll of banknotes and the thinker with his book will all have to stand aside and take the lower place. When humanity rose to its highest historic level in the person of Jesus of Nazareth it was seen that he came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. This is the quality of life which alone becomes redemptive, saving the world from its sins.

LXXIV

COUNT THE COST!

Luke 14 : 25-35

" There went great multitudes with him and he turned and said " those searching words which we find in this passage! The multitudes were beginning to believe that Jesus might be the promised Messiah, that the crisis might be near at hand, that he might be ready to set up his visible Kingdom. They wanted to keep near him that they might not miss any of the glories and blessings which they believed were to accompany that consummation of Israel's hopes.

In the face of this growing popularity Jesus raised the standards of discipleship and imposed more searching tests. He knew that the narrow gate does not commonly gather the largest crowd. When he saw the crowd collecting therefore he proceeded to show them that the gate was narrow and the way strait.

He knew that the highest ideal does not ordinarily poll the largest number of votes. When he saw these " great multitudes " preparing to roll up a tremendous majority for the cause he represented, he immediately added ten cubits to the stature of those ideals which the people in their shortsighted fervor were vainly imagining to be adequate for the establishment of the Kingdom.

" Count the cost," he cried to them as he saw them thronging him. If any man comes to me and does not subordinate his own natural affection, his love of gain and " his own life also " to that supreme spiritual loyalty requisite to discipleship, " he cannot be my disciple."

" His fellow-countrymen were very much excited by the hope of a wonderful social and political deliverance which they wrongly believed to be close at hand," says Dean Inge. " He told them that their millennium was not coming at all, nor anything like it. But he added that he had been commissioned to bring them something better, namely, a spiritual and moral emancipation which would make life happy and blessed for them whatever earthly troubles they might have to endure. This ' unpatriotic pessimism ' was too much for his countrymen. So although they approved of the excellent moral tone of his sermons, they had him crucified."

" Count the cost," he said over and over again. He would have every Christian know in advance " exactly what he was in for." " Whosoever doth not bear his cross cannot be my disciple." " Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." " Ye call me Master and Lord. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. The servant is not greater than his Lord." " Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake."

He illustrated this necessity of counting the cost by two references to current events. Pilate had recently begun an aqueduct and had been compelled to abandon his project for want of means to complete it. Jesus would not have the people placed in a similarly absurd position. " Which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost whether he have sufficient to finish it."

Herod the king had been attacked by Aretas, an Arabian king, for divorcing his first wife (who was a daughter of this king) in order to marry Herodias. The result was that his weaker army was entirely destroyed. " What king going to make war against another king sitteth not down

first and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?" Jesus would not have them undertake the Christian life without knowing what they were about lest haply men might mock them, saying, "These men began to build and were not able to finish."

It may be questioned whether the modern church has been taking its Master seriously at this point. Has it been taking its own obligations seriously? The living of a Christian life is no holiday affair. We shall not advance the cause of him who uttered these searching words by welcoming all sorts and conditions of mind and heart into church membership. Let it be made clear to all who come that what they are undertaking is rigorous. The rolls of membership might not be so extensive as at present, but would not the real power of the church for good be greater if its life were made more intensive?

It is our business as it was his business to hold up the Christian standard of living and not whittle it down by endless shavings of concession until it has so fine a point upon it as to be indistinguishable from the standard of worldly society. And it is our further business to strive to live according to that standard through his grace, whether men hear or forbear, leaving the result with him who is responsible for the whole undertaking in a sense that we are not.

By this straightforward policy of thoroughness we shall also consult the highest interest of the cause we have at heart. There is a certain fine flavor in that passage from "The Strength of the People," by Mrs. Bosanquet. "In all social work there is one main thing which it is important to remember — that *the mind is the man.* If we are clear about this great fact we have an unfailing test to apply to any scheme of social reformation. Does it appeal

to men's minds? Not merely to their momentary needs or appetites or fancies, but to the higher powers of affection, thought and reasonable action? Great religious teachers who have put their faith in spiritual conviction and conversion, who have refused to accept anything short of the whole man, have achieved results which seem miraculous to those who are willing to compromise for a share in the souls they undertake to guide! "

But what a paradoxical statement is this! " If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, he cannot be my disciple." Is this the teacher who on another occasion denounced the slippery Pharisees who made the command, " Honor thy father and thy mother," of no effect by their moral shuffling? They said, " Corban," and then refused to use their means to minister to the needs of their parents? Is this the One who on his cross looked with affection upon Mary and thinking of her future necessities, forgot his own anguish in order to say to John, " Son, behold thy mother," and to Mary herself, " Mother, behold thy son "?

There seems an inconsistency here. But Jesus spake not as the scribes nor as we do here in Connecticut. He put his principles oftentimes in bold paradoxes to arrest attention and to fix some principle in the minds of his hearers. He confidently left something to the good sense and discrimination of his hearers who would not always follow the letter of his words to their hurt, but would by the spirit of them enter into life.

In any normal situation the natural affection felt for those we are bidden by Scripture and by our own best instincts to hold dear, would be in no sense incompatible with supreme loyalty to Christ. The two are not opposed. But where an abnormal situation does arise, where the call of

the nearest relatives looks in one moral direction and the call of duty to Christ in quite another, then the secondary must yield to the primary.

No daughter is called upon to degrade herself to gain means to minister to the pleasure of her father and mother. No man is warranted in stealing to gain wealth to minister to the pleasure of the wife he loves. When conflict comes between the natural implications of devotion to those we hold dear and the higher law of obedience to the perfect will of God, the latter must take precedence. And in place of putting this in that abstract form common to our ethical teachers, the Master, himself an Oriental shaping his message primarily for Orientals, utters this truth in a striking paradox.

The cost of discipleship as here defined is seen to be great. It involves nothing less than the entire devotion of the entire man to the highest ideals the world has ever seen. Whatever has value is purchased with a great price. The redemption of our souls was precious and it was purchased by the blood of Christ. The gaining of that quality of character worthy to be called "Christian" is precious and it comes only where a man invests all that he has in securing that pearl of great price.

There are no short cuts — it cannot be done by casting one's self down from the pinnacle of some temple in a momentary burst of dare-devil enthusiasm. There are no royal roads — it cannot be achieved by some clever bit of alchemy which would change stones into bread. There is no hope along the line of easy compromise — the devil does not have "all the kingdoms of this world" to sell, and if he had we could not afford to take them on his terms. The high end in view can only be gained by strict obedience to every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

"Nothing fails like success. It kills off families more surely than any oppression that falls short of slavery. Luxury has destroyed every class or nation that practiced it." Therefore let not that pungent, preservative salt of Christian life and service found in the spirit and habit of self-sacrifice, ever lose its savor! For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever would lose his life for Christ's sake shall find it.

LXXV

THE PARABLE OF FORGIVENESS

Matt. 18 : 15-35

With all his lofty idealism Jesus never forgot that he was dealing with flesh and blood. He knew that the interests of the Kingdom would be intrusted to human beings. He faced the fact of moral limitation. "It must needs be that offenses come" — it all comes inevitably in the day's work. Therefore the Christian must learn how to live in a faulty world bearing himself with large-minded charity.

Here are "counsels of perfection" regarding the treatment of fault in others! "If thy brother trespass against thee go and tell him his fault *between thee and him alone.*" The more common way is to tell all the neighbors or the boarding house or the newspapers. "Between thee and him alone" — for where two men unwitnessed by the prying eyes of any third party, and with even one of them in the right mood touching the trespass committed, are met together, there is an Unseen One in the midst lending his aid.

The man who is sinned against is to take the initiative — "go and tell him his fault," without waiting for the offender to come forward and confess. The man who is not at fault can more appropriately and more effectively make the overtures. It is so in the divine economy — there the initiative is taken by the Father who seeks to reconcile sinful men to himself. While we were yet sinners he sent his Son.

If the offender meets this overture with the right response the matter is settled — "if he hear thee thou hast gained thy brother." If he refuses, then it may be well to try again in company with one or two trusted friends of both parties. By the mouths of two or three witnesses the equities may be indicated and established. If he refuses their offices then the matter is to be reported to the congregation of Christian believers. And if the offender declines to heed the admonition of the church, he becomes as a heathen man and a publican.

It ought to be noted that this counsel was to apply to personal wrongs done — "If thy brother trespass against thee." The social and legal aspects of the evil done are not dealt with in this passage. And the forgiveness to be extended was conditional — it depended upon the willingness of the wrongdoer to respond to the kindly approach. The right action of two is demanded for the experience of forgiveness — it must be proffered by a magnanimous heart and be received by a penitent one. The blessing of forgiveness cannot fall like the rain of heaven upon the just and upon the unjust. A man can be rained on no matter what his mood may be, but he can only be forgiven when his mood is right.

In the just exercise of this grace Christian society may wield a marvelous power. It may by extending mercy to those who have made moral failure aid in releasing them from their evil habits; it may by harsh condemnation help to fix them in wrong courses. It was not to some ecclesiastic wielding an esoteric and magical authority but to Christian society that Jesus said, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." So potent is the mercy shown or the harshness exhibited toward one who has done wrong that the judgments of earth have a

way of registering themselves in results which determine the verdict in an abiding moral order.

In the face of this august responsibility and this searching demand for charity toward offenders, Peter felt that he would like to have his obligations more closely defined. He would be glad to have a limited stint of duty cut out for him. "Lord, how oft! How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times?" The Rabbis said three times was enough and Peter felt that he was more than generous in raising the limit to "seven."

But the man who is showing mercy according to some footrule, keeping tab on the number of times he has overlooked the faults of his fellows, is not in the mood to show genuine forgiveness. "It profits little," Moody used to say, "to bury the hatchet and leave the handle sticking out." In the great moral order there is no Heavenly Forgiveness Company Limited, and among men there can be no fixed specifications as to the practice of mercy.

Jesus answered, "I say not seven times but seventy times seven." This meant that forgiveness was to be repeated indefinitely, for no man would think of setting down the particular instances when he had shown himself magnanimous toward an offender until the account stood "four hundred and ninety" and then suspend payment of mercy due. "We are to forgive whenever we can — as often as the wrong-doer gives us an opportunity."

The Master told them a short story bearing on this duty. A certain king had a subject who owed him eleven millions of dollars. When that subject failed financially the king generously forgave him all that debt and released him from the obligation. But this subject had a fellow-subject who owed him twenty-five dollars, and when this debtor was similarly straightened his hard-hearted creditor said,

" Pay me what thou owest "; and then took him by the throat and cast him into prison.

What frightful ingratitude and inconsistency! Alas for those who expect that the eleven millions of faulty deeds charged against them in the moral accounts of the world will be overlooked by the divine compassion and then go out visiting a fierce condemnation upon the petty offenses of others! How far they are from the kingdom of God! How far they must travel before they come within sight of that Cross where he hung and prayed, " Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

It was a man high in the civil life of our country, the chief executive of one of our great cities, who said, " I forgive everybody, everything, every night." It is the only way. Hatred, bitterness, cherished grudges have no useful place in life. The forgiving heart alone wins those reactions, perpendicular and horizontal, which have abiding worth. And our own need of mercy should prompt us all to the steady exercise of mercy, for if we from our hearts forgive not every one his trespasses neither will our Heavenly Father forgive us.

We maintain a kind of ethical bimetalism in our treatment of certain faults committed by men and by women. Some man in early life may step aside from the path of purity yet return and become again a respected member of society. But the woman once having stepped aside receives no such favor. This is partly due to the higher standard of purity set for woman — it is none too high, yet it should be matched by one for men equally high. But it is due much more to the large measure of ready scorn heaped upon the erring woman even by her own sex. And by that harsh, unthinking, unyielding censure the offender may speedily be hardened into brazen effrontery

where she hurls back the world's scorn in an open defiance of all regard for decency.

It would cost something in courage, in self-sacrifice, in patient affection for the good women of her acquaintance by their delicate, merciful consideration and undiscouraged moral interest to exercise that power of Christian absolution named by the Master in this passage — true forgiveness always costs, as the world saw once for all on Calvary — but their joy and their reward in loosing that soul from her sin would be great.

It is to that merciful disposition that Jesus entrusts "the keys of the kingdom." The practice of mercy opens the way for men into the favor of God even as the lack of it shuts them out by fixing their feet more firmly in the path of evil. It is not for Christian society to shrink from this high responsibility nor to abdicate its rights. Let it rather put the shoes from off its feet as standing on holy ground and exercise this power of binding and of loosing. It can by its own bearing fix wrongdoers more hopelessly in the power of their sin or it can aid them in finding glad release.

We shall most readily gain and retain the merciful mood by frankly confessing our own sins in the presence of the Infinite Mercy. The glaring fault of the Pharisee lay in the fact that he was altogether too ready to recognize and confess other men's faults, meanwhile neglecting the plain duty of first sweeping his own dooryard. "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers." His statement may have been well within the facts. He probably had never committed any of the wrongs there named. His outward life made a better showing, no doubt, than that of the poor publican in the rear. But confession of sin like charity begins at home.

The fact of moral failure is universal and each man

enters into a new dignity when he frankly confesses his own need of forgiveness, standing ready meanwhile to extend the same mercy to his fellows. How many of you read "De Profundis," a cry from the depths, by Oscar Wilde? Overtaken by disgrace unspeakable, a criminal in Reading Gaol, he drew back the curtains of his soul and allowed the world to look in. There are passages in his book as searching as anything in the "Imitation." And near the end he says, "The highest moment in a man's life is when he kneels in the dust and beats upon his breast and tells all the sins of his life." We feel our need of mercy and we do pray for it; and that same prayer should teach us all the mood of mercy.

LXXVI

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Mark 11 : 1-11

Jesus came as a Prophet revealing his truth to the minds of men. He came as a Priest laying upon the altar of service the acceptable offering of his own life. He came as a King asserting the sovereignty of his spirit over the wills of men. The narratives of his " triumphal entry " take up this last aspect of his work, recalling the time when he was welcomed to the capital city of his nation with hosannas. The streets of Jerusalem rang with the cry, " Blessed is the king that cometh in the name of the Lord."

He visited five places in connection with that entry. They are significant as to his purpose for this many-sided life of ours, throwing light upon the inclusiveness of his redemptive aim.

He first laid his hand on a bit of property. He boldly claimed it for his own high purpose. " Go into the village and find a colt tied whereon no man ever sat. Loose him and bring him. If any one say unto you, ' Why do ye this? ' say ye, ' The Lord hath need of him.' "

It was the Master's custom to walk, his own two feet carrying him on his errands of mercy. But on this occasion he would enter the city mounted in fulfillment of an ancient prediction as to the approach of the Messiah. He would assert his Messianic character by a significant act which the whole multitude could see. To do this he must have the ass — he had need of that bit of property.

Let the ass stand as a modest representative of the material values of the world. The Lord has need of them all. His purpose for the race can only be achieved as these materials are yielded to him in willing consecration. The farms and the mines, the stores and the shops, the railroads and the steamships, must yield to the mastery of his spirit and be administered with reference to the high ends of human well-being which he held steadily in view. The whole industrial framework of society must be made the subject of a higher consecration that his will may be done on earth as it is done in heaven. He therefore laid his hand upon that bit of property claiming it for his use and asserting his kingship in the realm of material values.

He entered the capital city of his nation, the center of its political life, asserting his kingship — "He went before going up to Jerusalem." When he rode through its streets his friends hailed him as a king though he wore no crown, carried no scepter, displayed none of the usual symbols of authority. He accepted the designation, gladly remarking that if the childlike minds of those who loved him had held their peace at such an hour, the stones of the street would have become vocal in hailing his sovereignty.

The political institutions of any people are meant to express the sentiments and principles which make for human well-being. In the higher exercise of their citizenship men are bent upon realizing the claim that "the powers that be are ordained of God." They are seeking to make the civil government a finite copy of the infinite moral order of the universe.

It is natural, therefore, for Christ to assert his sovereignty in the field of political interest. The State must be ruled not by the Church — God forbid — but by Christian principles and ideals, by the potency of the Christian spirit

safeguarding the deeper interests of all men from the lowest to the highest.

The moral government of all those forms of activity which make up our political life must be taken upon his shoulder. They can rest securely on no less august a foundation. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, "all the city was moved." When the spirit and method of his life enter effectively into the life of a modern city, it too is moved — moved to higher levels of thought and action. In the progress of his Kingdom the civic interests must finally hail him as Master and cry with all the other forces of a renewed civilization, "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord."

He went into the place of worship in Jerusalem. He found the Temple filled with noisy, dickering traders and money changers. The place which should stand pre-eminently for the diffusion of spiritual values had dropped to a low level under the weight of human greed. He rose up in his indignation and drove out the unclean, grasping horde, restoring the atmosphere of sincere devotion, making his Father's house once more "a house of prayer." He thus asserted his mastery over the worship of his nation.

The life that is to do justly and love mercy must for its renewal and reënforcement go apart ever and anon to walk humbly before God. The attitude of reverent trust, the upward look and reach of a holier aspiration, the sense of immediate handclasp with forces not of this earth — all this is demanded by the soul which would live nobly. Jesus knew how essential is this higher employ of human faculty and he boldly asserted his sovereignty over that universal instinct.

The results of his work are apparent. He has entered the heathen temples where ignorance was bowing before hideous idols. He does not upbraid the misguided souls —

he quietly removes the idols, turning the attention of the worshipers to himself as he says: " He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Worship the Father, in spirit and in truth."

He visited the place of instruction. Luke tells us that after he entered the city he was teaching daily " and all the people were very attentive to hear him." In the Orient the work of instruction is much less formal than it is under these western skies. Socrates gathered his pupils about him in the market place. In the University of Cairo you will see today teachers seated in the square adjoining one of the Mosques with groups of pupils about them in the open air. And the Master was teaching in the open court adjoining the Temple asserting his sovereignty over the work of instruction.

The Church and the school are meant to be near neighbors. The cap and gown of the college man point to the ecclesiastical origin of the higher education. Jesus' favorite title was " Master," and he called his followers " disciples," that is to say, " learners " in the life he came to manifest and to impart.

The chief office of the school is not to impart information or to give technical training to particular faculties or to increase the earning power of the individual as he offers his training for sale in the market. These by-products of the educational process are all incidental to the main purpose. The high office of the school is the development, the enrichment and the maturing of personality. The school which is fully aware of itself comes that men may have life and have it more abundantly. It seeks to make them alive at more points, alive on higher levels, alive in more praiseworthy fashion. It was quite in line with his vast purpose that Jesus should enter the lists where instruction was given and assert there the sovereignty of his own purpose and method.

He went finally to a home. When evening came "he went forth out of the city to Bethany and lodged there." Bethany was the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. It was the nearest approach to a real home (aside from his boyhood's home in Nazareth) which the Son of Man with nowhere to lay his head had found. And here the last supreme act of the day was to go out to Bethany and lay his hand in blessing upon the most fundamental of all human institutions.

The various experiences indicated above all came in the day's work, but the climax is significant. When Jesus had asserted his sovereignty over the industrial life of the world by claiming the consecration of its property; when he had ridden into the capital city of his nation as a King, insisting upon the reign of a higher law in civic life; when he had cleansed the Temple of its unworthy elements, making it once more a place of spiritual helpfulness; when he had as the world's Greatest Teacher swept aside the petty quibbles of the ecclesiastics and the scholastics, setting forth that vital truth which makes men free—when he had done all this, then he gave himself to the home whose alabaster box of uncalculating love has filled the earth with its fragrance.

The choicest product of his beneficent rule in human affairs is to be found in the Christian home. Has Mohammedan Turkey or Hindoo India anything worthy to be set beside the Christian home where wife and children find their full honor and opportunity? Let the God who answers by such fair exhibits of his power as are to be found in the Christian home, be God!

When the picturesque swamis at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago were telling us what their respective faiths had done for the world, they had nothing to say about what those faiths had accomplished for the home. There

was nothing to be said. It would have brought a coldness over the meeting had the point been raised. But within our Christian civilization there is no mightier agent of redemption than the consecrated home honored and blessed by the presence of Christ within its walls.

We stand here in the twentieth century better able to appreciate the full royalty of the nature of Christ because of what we have seen in the ages since of the blessed results of his reign. What should be our response? Let it come in a more complete devotement of our total life to this King of kings! Let Church and State, market-place and school and, best of all, the home, stand together in glad allegiance before him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is the king that cometh in the name of the Lord."

LXXVII

"AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT"

Mark 11 : 12-33; Luke 13 : 6-9

In this story of the barren fig tree, it has seemed to many Bible students that the teaching of a certain parable has gotten mixed up with what might have been regarded as an inexplicable miracle. We read in Mark's gospel that the Master "seeing a fig tree afar off covered with leaves came to it if haply he might find fruit thereon." But it proved to be fruitless, having "nothing but leaves." He then said to it: "No man shall eat fruit of thee hereafter forever." And his disciples heard it.

We read in Luke's gospel, "He spake also this parable. A certain man had a fig tree. He came and sought fruit thereon and found none. He then said to the vinedresser, Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down. Why cumbereth it the ground?" But at the vinedresser's request he allowed it to stand one year more, allowing time to dig about it and fertilize it, with the understanding that if it then bore fruit it should remain — if not, it should be cut down.

It would be difficult for us to believe that Jesus "cursed the fig tree" (as some have claimed), blasting its life with a word and dooming it to death. Difficult for several reasons:

First of all because the narrative does not say that he "cursed" it. Peter referred to the matter the following day, saying, "The fig tree which thou cursed is withered away," but a number of inaccurate remarks fell from the

lips of the impulsive Peter. He spoke unadvisedly with his lips on several occasions, "not knowing what he said."

In the second place it would attribute to Jesus an action apparently wanton and petulant, entirely out of character with the Master's moods and methods.

And last of all, the poor fig tree was not at fault — "It was not the season of figs." This was in April. The earliest figs came in June, and the ordinary crop in August.

The whole idea of having Jesus use his supernatural power to blast a helpless tree because he had not found figs upon it several months before any of the trees in that region bore figs, becomes repugnant both to the intelligence and to the moral sense. The real truth of the matter seems to lie about here — the tree was abnormally full of leaves. And Jesus used it as a symbol of those lives which belie their profession.

He used the tree as an object lesson suggesting a truth particularly applicable to the Jews of that day. Their moral attitude was one which flowered forth abundantly with the promise of fruitfulness. But when judged by a demand for the recognizable fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, mildness and self-control" they also belied their professions. And the word of censure not strictly applicable to the tree which was unable to show fruit "out of season" was a fitting word of judgment to be pronounced upon the leaders in the Jewish Church who were at that hour reaching the climax of spiritual blindness and unfruitfulness in plotting against the Chosen One of Israel.

"By their fruits ye shall know them." Not by the leaves, nor by the twigs, nor by the roots, which are all but means to an end! "By their fruits" — by that which they give off to meet the need of a hungry world.

It is by this rule that fruit trees and moral beings as well are to be tested.

The fig tree stood in Bethany and the Master with his disciples passed over the brow of the Mount of Olives and came into the city. "He entered into the Temple," and found it defiled by the hateful presence of that sordid, mercenary spirit everywhere fatal to devotion. No man can serve God and Mammon anywhere, least of all in the courts of the Lord's house.

The tables of the greedy, grasping money changers were there. Every Jew was required to pay annually the half-shekel for the support of the Temple and it had to be paid in Jewish coin. The pilgrims from afar coming up to the Feast of the Passover brought Gentile money, and the conversion of their coin into Hebrew currency by these shrewd, conscienceless money changers had become a profitable trade. Their greed had edged its way into the very place of prayer.

The men who bought and sold doves to be used in making the offerings according to Jewish law were also there. They were driving hard bargains with the religious devotees who had come long distances to enjoy the sacred privilege of making their offering in the place where they believed the divine honor dwelt. Greed and Fraud had been adding cubits to their stature until these base qualities in those grasping men stood up like two ugly demons in some heathen temple. They defiled the holy place. They destroyed the mood of devotion.

It was a horrible sight which met the eyes of the Master when he entered that place of worship of which Solomon had said: "Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee in heaven above or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants! Hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant and of thy people Israel when

they shall pray in this place! Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and when thou hearest, forgive." It was a horrible sight and Jesus cried out, "Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations, the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves." He rose up in his wrath and drove them all out.

We have here "the wrath of the lamb" and we need not offer any word of apology for that indignation. "Any darkening of the world by cruelty or craft brought his soul to its feet fiery-eyed and defiant," as Dr. Jefferson puts it. "The sordid wretches who cared nothing for anthems and prayers and everything for money kindled a fire in him which well-nigh consumed him. The miscreants who fled before him had never seen such a flame as darted from his eyes. That a building erected for the purpose of adorning the name of God should be converted into a market was so abhorrent to his great soul that he swept onward into action which astounded his disciples and which has been to many minds a scandal ever since."

"No one can understand the cleansing of the Temple who has never experienced the force and heat of righteous indignation. If wood does not burn, it is because it is green or rotten. If hearts do not burn with holy fire against wickedness, it is because the heart is too undeveloped to feel what manly hearts were meant to feel or because the core of the heart has been eaten out by the base practices of a godless life."

It was a blow between the eyes for the corrupt ecclesiastics. "The scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy him, but they feared the people because all the people were astonished at his doctrine." Officialdom was against him habitually because its deeds were evil and he was a shining light cast upon their moral deformities. But the unwarped instincts of the common

people made response to his appeal and stood ready to array themselves on his side.

" Every evening he went forth out of the city," spending the night in the grateful atmosphere of that home of peace in Bethany. When he and his disciples returned the following morning and saw the fig tree which had been abnormally full of leaves now withering away, Peter remarked upon it. Jesus said to him: " Have faith in God! Whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe in his heart that what he saith cometh to pass, he shall have it."

Here is another of those bold metaphors used to indicate the stupendous results achieved by unwavering faith! The Master was not thinking of removing so many thousand cubic yards of earth as a contractor might in excavating for the foundation of a building. There is no record that Jesus or that any of his disciples ever attempted to move a mountain by faith except in the figurative sense suggested by this striking statement. But in preparing the way of the Lord, in making straight in the desert a highway for our God, in lifting up the morally low and in leveling down the interfering pride, so that the path of the coming Kingdom may be smooth, the stupendous moral results there symbolized have been and are being accomplished by believing men in every country in Christendom.

" Have faith in God." When I was in college in a certain eastern city I used to see those great brave words set in letters of gold in a marble slab on the front of a hospital. It was a Christian hospital, and hundreds of sufferers borne thither in the ambulance or assisted up the walk by loving friends looked up at those words and were reassured as they passed in at the door. The One who forgives all our iniquities and heals all our diseases was

there at work. He was blending his infinite energy with the benign skill and the tender sympathy of human hands and human hearts. They all wrought together for the same high end.

"Have faith in God." They are good words to engrave on a building devoted to healing or on the walls of a home devoted to Christian nurture or on the fleshy tables of an individual heart intent upon values which endure. It is for us to aim boldly for that simple, original potency of vital faith in God here suggested. This potency was clearly present in the Christianity of that age which stood close to the Master. It is meant to be the perpetual inheritance of the whole race of believing men.

LXXVIII

"LOVING IS THE SECRET OF RIGHT LIVING"

Mark 12 : 28-44

In an earlier chapter we saw the Master silencing the Herodians, the Pharisees and the Sadducees by his wise answers. The people "marveled greatly at him," and the quibblers had been impelled to hold their peace. Now a scribe thinks that he would like to try his hand. "One of the scribes heard them questioning together and knowing that he had answered them well, asked of him, What commandment is first?"

Jesus had been asked all sorts of questions, crafty questions, malicious questions, foolish questions, shallow questions, impossible questions. Here comes a question worthy of the Master's attention. What commandment stands first? What is the one great underlying principle of righteousness to which all ethical considerations must be finally adjusted?

It was indeed "a great far-reaching question representing a man at his best." This man was not in the mood to deal with the mint, anise and cummin of religion, with the pepper, the mustard and the allspice on the table of the Lord — he was reaching for that meat which comes down from above to give life unto the world. "Which is the greatest commandment in the law?" In the face of such a question the Master will not as at other times skillfully seek to extricate himself from some dilemma into which malicious questioners were seeking to force him. He speaks home to the heart of the questioner.

"Hear, oh Israel, the Lord our God is One." These are the words which are chanted above the cradle of every newborn Jewish child Here was Israel's great affirmation in the face of the debasing idolatry and polytheism which degraded the religious cults of men when the words first rang out! Here is Israel's great contribution to the religious thought of each succeeding age!

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and love thy neighbor as thyself." There is no other command greater than this. "Loving is the secret of right living," as Dr. Bridgman puts it. Out of the heart are the issues of life and out of a loving heart come right issues.

The ancient code was too largely negative. It was made up in the main of prohibitions. It said, "Thou shalt not." Thou shalt not kill, steal, lie, swear, covet or commit adultery. But the code of Christ is positive. It says, "Thou shalt love." Would you know what is the first commandment of all? Love God and love men — on these two positive commands hang the moral injunctions of all the prophets of all time.

The Master specified four main elements in the love men are to show toward God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength." It was a love which, like the ideal order John saw descending out of heaven from God, stood four-square, facing directly upon every conceivable aptitude and interest.

"The great commandment makes room for all these wide diversities," says Dean Hodges. "The strongest part of one man is the strength of his arm — he can do nothing so well as to pull and lift and push. Another man is a great deal better at thinking than he is at lifting; cares more for books than for blocks of wood or steel;

handles a pen more skillfully than any other tool; is best at whatever occupies the energies of the mind. Other people attain their highest possibilities in their affections; cannot manage very heavy weights nor make out very difficult problems, but are strong in believing, gifted with great capacity for trusting, blessed with deep and warm affections. Different natures approach God from different sides."

And the man who in more mystical fashion makes his approach to God in pure spiritual aspiration and in yearning for the sense of fellowship with the Eternal, makes his characteristic contribution to that fourfold love which is to bind the movements of the race "as with gold chains about the feet of God."

In studying this passage it is well to bear in mind the fact that in the New Testament two different words are used for "love." The love which is denoted by the Greek word "*agapao*" means the love of an intelligent good will. The love denoted by the word "*phileo*" is a more ardent term and means the close affection of a warm heart. We love God and we love our neighbors with the first form of love. "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son" with the first form of love.

But when the New Testament speaks of the love Jesus had for Lazarus — "Behold, how he loved him"; and when it says, "He that loveth son or daughter more than me," it uses the second term as indicating a close personal relation. It is significant that when we are commanded to "love our enemies," it is the former word which is used — it is to be the love of choice and of an intelligent good will rather than the unstudied feeling of the heart flowing out inevitably toward the objects of an intimate affection.

When this serious-minded scribe heard the direct answer of Jesus to his request for the fundamental principle in

right living he remarked: "Master, thou hast well said that he is One and there is none other but he. And to love him and to love one's neighbor as one's self is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." He had the gist of it. No man is far from the Kingdom of God who understands that the supreme thing in religion is its moral requirement rather than its ritual observance and orders his life by that sense of values.

In that age when formalism had all but smothered real religion it was refreshing to hear such a word from the lips of a scribe. Jesus commended him for getting beneath the millinery and the ruffling that lay at the surface of the conventional worship in order to lay his hand on the warm, throbbing flesh of real religion. "When Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." And after that no man dared ask him any questions. His skill in parrying their crafty attacks, and his straightforwardness in meeting the honest seeker after truth with light in which there was no darkness at all, dispelled the mood for further questioning.

He then spoke to them of how far his own worth transcended the conventional homage easily accorded him. "How say the scribes that the Messiah is the Son of David?" Jesus insisted that his title to recognition lay much deeper than the mere fact of Davidic descent. He quoted from one of their psalms where David is represented as calling the Messiah "Lord." "If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" The Messiah in his own person possessed that which entirely transcended the claims of one whose title to exaltation rested mainly upon the fact that he was descended from the house and lineage of David — he possessed that character which warranted him in asserting his right to be David's Lord.

The chapter closes with the beautiful bit about the

poor widow with her two mites which make a farthing. The Master had warned his disciples against the showy pretensions of certain insincere ecclesiastics. "Beware of the scribes who desire to walk in long robes and have salutations in the market place and chief seats in the synagogue, but devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers." And as he sat over against the treasury, he saw the people casting in their money and many that were rich cast in much. But in striking contrast there came "one poor widow and she threw in two mites." "A single, solitary, sorrowful, poverty-stricken figure lost in the passing crowds but filling the Master's eye."

"This poor widow hath cast in more than they all." More what? Not more money surely — no sort of higher mathematics could make that out. The computation was made by one who has measures of value which commerce knows not of. He looked not on the outward appearance or upon the money value of a gift, but upon its heart.

"She hath cast in more than they all" — more love, more self-sacrifice, more of that inner devotion to the God of those high values for the furtherance of which the offering was being made. When the Master added up the columns of figures which his own discerning heart set down, and struck a trial balance, it was manifest that the largest gift made that day stood to the credit of the poor widow who brought two mites.

Loving is the secret of right living and loving is the secret of great giving. Loving is great giving. "If there first be a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath and not according to what he hath not." Here are the terms of the comparison as Jesus viewed it — "They of their superfluity — she of her want." It was not a question as to which gift weighed most on the scales, but which one loved most from the heart.

How completely Jesus answered and vanquished his detractors! They never surprised or forced him into a foolish word or into an unseemly mood. They were always laying in wait " that they might catch him in his talk," but they never did.

" Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Lawyers, do not trouble yourselves about tribute money and questions of family relationship! Ask deep questions, grand questions, massive questions. Get up into the higher region of thinking and there learn how possible it is for reason to blossom into faith and for the hard, literal intellect to bow down in tender homage before the Infinite God." He was " the truth." He heard all their questions and then spake to them as never man spake.

LXXIX

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

Matt. 25 : 31-46

Here is a passage to be read, pondered, obeyed, rather than discussed. We fear to cloud the issue if we undertake to expound it. Let us sit down rather, and allow its own majestic phrases and compelling truths to have their way with us for the hour.

Where in all the Master's teachings has he portrayed a scene more august? The setting he gives his truth is stately. "The Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him." Here is a celestial visitant attended by his heavenly court. "He shall sit upon the throne of his glory." Here is One who bears with him the authoritative standards of that upper world. "Before him shall be gathered all nations." It is a universal assize — there shall be no speech nor language where this judgment shall not take effect. This method of moral discrimination shall go out through all the earth and its divisions to the end of the world.

We have here the picture of a universal, cosmic process brought within the limits of a canvas which can be framed in human speech and human perception. The principle of humane consideration for one's fellows is in automatic fashion continually separating the sheep from the goats. It was so from the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. The readiness or the lack of readiness to meet the demand for humane service is forever setting

men at the right hand or on the left of that awarding authority which sits supreme in the heavens.

"He shall separate them one from another." He is constantly doing just that. The three familiar passages in this chapter of Matthew's Gospel portray under varying forms of action the everlasting process of separation at work. He is dividing the wise from the foolish, the productive from the slothful, the generous from the selfish. The two parables of the Virgins and of the Talents, together with this sublime scene of judgment, are all meant to bring out the same truth that moral discriminations are being made by the One who speaks as having authority.

The principle upon which the award is made is the central, vital truth oft emphasized in this passage. Here is the Master of the Ages making bold to assert that acceptance or rejection in the Day of Judgment will turn upon the presence or the absence of the spirit and practice of genuine kindness. The rating given by One who assumes to sit upon the throne of glory, gathering the nations before him, proceeds upon the principle that men are to be judged according to the treatment they have dealt out to their weaker fellows.

It was a brave thing to say in the face of that religious world which had gone to seed in its passion for orthodoxies, rituals and other ecclesiastical machinery. It was not the way men were to be judged according to the views held by his contemporaries. But Jesus was not the child of his age — he was the Son of God. Not according to the mode by which men worship, not according to the technical correctness of their philosophical interpretations of spiritual reality, not according to the measure of outward respectability they exhibit in their avoidance of the coarser sins of the flesh, are men to be judged in the last day. They are to be judged by their humanity as it has found

expression or has failed to find expression in such generous, kindly, effective service of human need as is here portrayed.

How modern it sounds when we read it out loud. It might have been written yesterday. What a rebuke it brings to those who cast aspersions upon the Church of Christ, claiming everything for "the social emphasis in modern life." One would think sometimes that social service must have been invented over night by some of these nervously irreligious humanitarians. Here in these words uttered by the Master well-nigh two thousand years ago is a great principle, to which all our humanitarian propaganda must look for inspiration and ethical warrant. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ye have done it unto me."

"I was hungry," he said, "and ye gave me meat. I was thirsty and ye gave me drink. I was a stranger and ye took me in. I was sick and ye visited me. I was in prison and ye came unto me." He is taking the whole mass of human need, physical, social and moral, upon his heart in such sympathetic fashion as to make it his own. His actual identification of his own feelings with theirs, as men suffered in all these forms of human deprivation, made it true that service rendered to the needy would be service rendered to him.

"We try to remember Jesus in many ways," said Allen E. Cross. "We build our churches; we sing songs to his name; we take the bread and wine at communion; and so we try to bring to life again the Lord Jesus and come close to him. Jesus seems to say in this passage: 'If you would remember me, remember your needy fellows. If you would do anything for me, do it for them. If you would serve me, serve them. If you forget them and deny them, you forget me and deny me.' He puts himself in their place so completely that he makes every act

of kindness on our part a sacrament of remembrance. What I may call its sacramental value is to me the dearest and most beautiful quality of this test."

His words fairly staggered the minds of those to whom he spoke. The words would stagger us had not long use and familiarity dulled our minds to their incisive quality. The people were amazed that the poor, hungry, ragged, diseased, nameless (and ofttimes imprisoned) beggars they saw about the streets were actually the objects of the divine concern. His identification of himself with their need bewildered them.

"We saw thee hungry? Lord, when?" To picture that multitude of needy folk whose names are on the records of the Associated Charities, and ever and anon on the books of the police court, "as one gigantic personage and that personage himself, was a flight of the poetic imagination so audacious and difficult" as to make it well-nigh impossible for the plodding, literal mind to follow him.

The kindly, generous people who had been ministering to human need so effectively as to merit his "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," were puzzled at the audacity of his statement. They were uncertain as to its implications. "Lord, when?" It had become the habit of their lives to feed and to clothe, to visit and to relieve the needy, but they were not aware of the lofty spiritual significance of such humane service. "They lived in a Presence they did not see." They had caught the Christ-spirit all unaware of its ultimate source.

The habitual and spontaneous quality of the service rendered is brought out by those words, "Lord, when?" "The righteous did not know that they had been doing all this — therefore it was not done for the purpose of securing some happy end. They had wholly forgotten the

beneficent activities attributed to them — therefore they had not been mere legalists, obeying the letter of a law and endeavoring to set up by penance or gift some claim to the ultimate clemency of heaven. They had been simply breathing a spirit, embodying an aspiration, setting out in beautiful daily life that which was internal and vital. It was part of their nature, and had become such by ministries we call divine and spiritual."

How definite this passage makes the ideal of fellowship with Christ. "The seeming unreality of the spiritual life," as President King phrases it, need not disturb the mind of the man who has entered sympathetically into the high mood of the life here portrayed. If you would know him, then know by unselfish and sympathetic ministry all these forms of need with which in mystical fashion he has identified himself.

"Have I been so long a time with you, Philip," or Thomas, Henry, Richard, "and yet hast thou not known me?" Have you seen no hungry lives in your community? Have you found no strange and lonely lives in your city craving friendship? Have you heard of none who were ill, awaiting the ministry of human skill and love? Have there been none imprisoned within their own evil habits and by the bars of men, needing deliverance? He that has known and served these aright has known and served me. How sayest thou then, "Show us"?

You may have seen some man like Horace Bentley, who went about among the poor and needy that he might minister to their lack. He was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. He was a father to the poor, and the case that he knew not he searched out. He caused the widow's heart to sing for joy, and the blessing of one who was ready to perish came upon him. And when you looked closely upon those to whom he ministered, you saw in

the midst of them another whose form was like unto that of the Son of God. And this ancient Scripture was there fulfilled before your eyes.

These words of Christ were uttered to indicate the fundamental principle upon which all nations of men are to be judged, rather than to serve as a detailed program of the future world. It is to be noted, however, with the utmost seriousness, that the Merciful One said of those who had been observing the law of kindness, "These shall go into life eternal"; and of those who had failed to serve, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Take heed, therefore, how ye live!

LXXX

A STUDY IN VALUES

Mark 14 : 1-11

"Look at the picture! A meal served in the house of Simon because his house was commodious! The Master in the place of honor, the disciples near him! Martha waiting at table! Lazarus looking out on things with the light of his second life in his eyes! Mary with the inner vision of a loving heart reading in the Master's face a shadow of things to come! A hush in the talking, Mary kneeling at the Master's feet, the broken vase, the perfume floating through the room!"

"There was a silence in which love eternal was trying to say something to each man's heart," said Percy Ainsworth. "Then the first man to break the silence was the man to whom the silence had said nothing. 'It might have been sold' — and we feel that vandal feet have trampled the vase and its precious contents into the dust. The roar of the market place has swept into the sanctuary of one worshiping, love-laden, life-laden moment."

"It might have been sold." How blind the man was! He had held the bag so long and so tight that now the bag held him. He could not see out. There was nothing in his vision at that moment but pieces of money. Man does not live by cash alone — Mary had learned that priceless lesson but Judas had not. Mary had been sitting at the feet of the Master, instructed in the higher mathematics which dealt with values which Judas knew not of.

Judas knew the market price of perfume and alabaster.

Mary knew something of the abiding worth of devoted action. The man who blindly undertakes to reduce love values and spiritual worth to terms of dollars and cents has already betrayed his Lord. He has already gone out into the darkness where it is night. He is on his way to that moral state where it were better that he had not been born.

"It might have been sold" — there are a great many things (and those the choicest things in life) which cannot be sold. They are given away — they cannot be had on any other terms. The woman's kiss of affection, the mother's devoted self-sacrifice, the life blood of the patriot, the generous friendship of an uncalculating heart — these things cannot be bought and sold as if they were meat and potatoes.

This man Judas was coarse and vulgar in the extreme. In a lovely scene like that, all he could see or say was, "It might have been sold." And the newly rich who go about with a look in their eyes and a tilt in their bearing which say as plainly as words could put it, "We are able to buy whatever we want; we have the cash," are no less coarse and vulgar. The houses they inhabit have never been filled with the fragrance of Mary's ointment.

And what a tragic disappointment awaits those who seek to buy their way into happiness with cold coin. The men who attempt to purchase the poor counterfeit of a woman's love on sale in certain dark streets — alas for them and alas for the women who traffic in that which cannot be priced! The greedy people who undertake to purchase social recognition and personal friendships with cash down — alas for them also.

It is a striking fact that both Matthew and Mark bring this narrative of the anointing into close connection with the first visit Judas made to the Chief Priests on his er-

rand of treachery. He did not understand the true measure of value in Simon's house. He did not understand the true measure of value when he bargained with the cruel ecclesiastics. He thought that thirty pieces of silver might be a fair price for moral infidelity. How blind he was! How little he knew of the circulating medium and the standards of value in that kingdom where his Master had been striving to make him a naturalized citizen!

The materialistic appraisement of all the current values is too much with us, late and soon. Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers. In a certain city where I was formerly a pastor the fact was brought out that the alderman from a certain ward had sold his vote on a certain important question for five thousand dollars. The citizens of that ward held an indignation meeting the following week where his action was hotly discussed. And one fervent orator, without realizing the humor of his outburst, exclaimed: "Think of this ward being represented by a man who could be bought for five thousand dollars! We ought to have a man to represent us who could not be bought for less than fifty thousand dollars!" His habit of monetary appraisement was too much for him, even in his higher moods of patriotism.

The defense offered by Judas was that the price of the ointment might have been given to the poor. It was the Master's custom to bid men serve him by serving his needier fellows. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, the hungry, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned, ye have done it unto me." But he would remind them that the opportunity for this humane service was constantly before them, while the chance to show their personal affection for him was passing. "The poor ye have always with you — Me ye have not always."

The humanitarian and utilitarian aspects of conduct are

not to blind us to the worth of those actions which are mainly or solely matters of sentiment. It is good for a woman to allow a man to see sometimes how much she loves him by some gracious attention which neither feeds nor clothes him. It is good for a husband to remember that his wife appreciates the bouquet on the table of affection as he spreads it for her almost as much as she does the roast beef.

"She hath wrought a beautiful" — that was the word he used — "she hath wrought a beautiful work on me." The ministry of art has its standing in the house of the Lord no less than the ministry of humane service rendered according to scientific principles. The man who shoes the horse or shoes the poor is not to say to the man who paints pictures or writes verses, "I have no use for you." And similarly the man who revels in Browning is not to sneer at the man who never heard of Sordello, but has helped to clean up the city. There are diversities of operations by the same Spirit and there are differences of administration by the same Lord.

And even our ministry to the poor is not to become solely utilitarian. The poor do not live by cash alone. They are not mere backs and bellies to be clothed and filled. They are minds and hearts and souls. They have imagination, sensibility, aspiration which crave their meat at the hands of thoughtful, kindly interest. The charity expert who has never sensed the fragrance of Mary's alabaster box is grossly incompetent for his high task. Let him read the "Survey" if he will, but let him read also the Fourth Gospel.

The building of a noble church structure to stand perhaps for centuries as an object of admiration; the filling of a park or a public garden with flowers; the placing of long rows of books filled with visions and dreams of a

larger world of wisdom on shelves easy of access to all hands; the hanging of beautiful canvases on the walls of a public art gallery — all these are services rendered to the poor, no less to be taken into account than the output of the soup kitchen and the free dispensary.

And the very extravagance, not to say recklessness, of a generous action ofttimes adds to its power of appeal. The pouring out of seventy-five dollars' worth of perfume on the head of him whom she loved caused this woman's devotion to be spoken of throughout the world wherever the gospel is preached. The uncalculating element in genuine devotion is one of the elements of its strength.

We have all been thrilled by those lines on "The Charge of the Light Brigade." "It is a brave description of a brave ride," as Myron Reed once said. "The colonel got his order, gathered the bridle rein and swung himself into the saddle, saying, 'Here goes the last of the Cardigans and thirteen thousand pounds a year.' When a man is the eldest son of a lord and has an income of sixty-five thousand dollars a year coming to him by and by, that means a good deal to lose. When he is called to lay all this down for the sake of a forlorn hope against guns double-shotted, and obeys instantly, he is a good deal of a soldier."

Some one has said of that charge, "It was magnificent but it was not war." I am not so sure about that — if all the heroism and devotion in the world directly inspired by "the immortal six hundred" could be finally added up in the day of judgment, it might easily appear that the six hundred made a royal investment of their lives. The unhappy croak, "To what purpose is this waste?" would be instantly refuted.

"Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die
Noble six hundred."

The higher standards of value are clearly brought out in this lesson. The sheer beauty of some act of unselfish devotion may serve to keep it alive in the memory of the race, a potent influence for good, long after the findings of a monetary trial balance have been forgotten. The "waste" is not to be assessed against the one who invests his life in a worthy cause but against the one who in "saving" himself loses himself.

The book of Numbers is not one of the great books of the Bible. There are more exact sciences than that of mathematics when we reckon up the enduring values in human experience. The pastor does well not to take his text too often from that book of Numbers. Let the Lord foot up and announce the number of conversions each year — he knows how many of them were conversions. Let the Lord who watched the people casting their gifts into the treasury and placed the only accurate appraisement given upon the two mites of the poor widow, give the final footings in the benevolent offerings of the Church. Let the Lord who knows, place his own evaluation upon the final worth of the woman's box of alabaster.

LXXXI

THE LAST SUPPER

Mark 14 : 12-25

The hour had come for the eating of the Passover. The last observance for Jesus and for his disciples of that ancient Jewish rite which looked back to the divine mercy in the past! The first observance for him and for them of that sublime Christian rite opening upon a glorious future filled with the same divine mercy!

He directed his disciples to enter the city and "follow a man bearing a pitcher of water." The man would be easily recognizable, for the bringing of water for household uses was woman's work. The unknown man may have been a servant in the house to which he would unconsciously guide the two disciples. "The unknown man" — no, not unknown, for he was known to Christ, who had a work for him to do. By his modest, inconspicuous service as he bore his water pot through the crowded street he fitted into that plan of grace which reached across the ages for our redemption.

They were to follow this man with the pitcher into the house where he entered, saying to the owner of the house: "The Master saith, Where is the guest chamber where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room, furnished. There make ready."

The house in Palestine as a rule is a simple affair, small, flat-roofed, one-storied. But here was a man whose house was more spacious — it had in it an upper room, a large spare chamber, "the guest chamber," furnished for hos-

pitality. The man's house and his disposition were both known to the Master, who arranged for the paschal feast at the home of this friend.

"He shall shew you a large upper room" — a room somewhat away from the noise and dust of the busy street; a room above the touch and power of those things which are of the earth earthy; a room lifted higher than the one-storied houses adjacent, giving it a wider outlook across the broad areas of human life; a room abutting directly upon the blue sky and upon all the forces of the upper air. He shall shew you that finer opportunity here symbolized in the upper room — enter and make ready for the august experiences awaiting you!

"His disciples went forth and came into the city and found as he had said unto them." This was the second time that week where the fact is noted that they found it just as Jesus had said. His words had a way of fulfilling themselves in the progress of events. The man who moves ahead as the word of Christ points will not be sent on fool's errands nor be led into blind alleys.

"In the evening he cometh with the Twelve." While they were eating the paschal lamb with the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread, all of them symbolic of experiences sacred and significant in the history of that Jewish race, he suddenly exclaimed, "One of you shall betray me." It was like the dropping of a Lyddite shell into their midst, destroying the whole atmosphere of peace.

"They began to be sorrowful." His own sad fate there indicated touched their hearts with a sense of alarm and foreboding. The thought of such treachery in the inner circle of his friends humiliated them. It became a time of heart-searching. And every man of them, one after another, looked straight into his own heart and then into the eyes of compassion, saying, "Lord, is it I?"

What a testimony to the genuineness of the moral fiber in the eleven that not a man of them inquired, "Is it hasty, impulsive, fickle Peter?" "Is it the hot-headed, intense, vindictive John?" "Is it Judas, cold, calculating and secretive?" No man cast an eye of suspicion upon his fellow — every man searched his own heart for the possibility of moral lapse. Out of such honest material men can be framed worthy to sit upon thrones of spiritual leadership.

"It is one of the Twelve," Jesus replied. And that was the tragedy of it. One of the Twelve! We are not surprised at the brutality of the Roman soldiers nor at the hateful bigotry of the ruling ecclesiastics nor at the crass indifference of the jeering multitudes. But the Twelve! They had for three years been the recipients of a transcendent care and nurture. We are amazed that any man of them could show himself so base and ungrateful. "The Son of Man goeth as it is written of him" — written in their own Scriptures and written in the hard unresponsiveness of the human heart — "but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!" His word was not one of denunciation but of infinite compassion for such moral blindness.

Then he took bread and blessed it and broke it, giving a bit to each of them, saying: "Take, eat. This is my body." Likewise he took the cup and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; this is my blood."

It would seem impossible for any open mind to be misled here into a crude literal use of these bold metaphors. Jesus was indicating in the manner habitual with him in all his teaching that the quality of life he had manifested before them in flesh and blood was not to be admired and adored alone — it was to be imparted and assimilated as

food is assimilated. Those men were to feed upon him even as they were eating the bread and drinking the wine which he employed as symbols of the life-qualities he would have them make their own. He put it vividly and in concrete form rather than in cautious abstract terms because he was an Oriental as they were Orientals. This method of imparting truth was habitual with him.

How significant it is that the two sacraments accepted by all branches of the Christian Church, baptism and the Lord's Supper, rest back upon the two most common acts of every-day life, washing and eating. This was characteristic of Christ's whole method. He would invest the commonest acts with sacramental significance and efficacy. He would have the usual and habitual hallowed by higher associations and made symbolic of august spiritual experiences.

The disciples found in that upper room of privilege a certain sacred observance. As the old feast was merged into the new under the skilled and holy hands of their Lord, it took on a deeper meaning. They felt, indeed, that what is divine in the realm of the Spirit was not merely to be reverenced and worshiped — it was to be shared, imparted, appropriated by them as branches of the true vine. The minds of those men rose to the thought of a splendid experience when he said: "This is my body. This is my blood." Their souls opened wide to be fed and quickened by that which he offered. There came a sense of awe and of humility, of yearning and of aspiration such as they had never known before.

They found also in that upper room more searching standards of conduct. "One of you shall betray me." His words included more than the mere physical act of driving a bargain with his enemies and in return for thirty pieces of silver pointing him out in the darkness of the

Garden where he had gone to pray. It included that act of the soul when it delivers over the inner capacity for a life like his into the hands of his enemies. The lack of fidelity to those higher impulses which he implants in every heart not utterly closed against him is betrayal. The real sin of betrayal lies in the readiness to put that finer quality of life he came to impart at the mercy of the coarse representatives of evil.

The disciples were facing not the easy conventions of society nor the mere tithing of mint, anise and cummin by obedience to those commonplace rules which keep men outwardly decent — they were facing standards so high that they could not see over them. They were standing in the presence of those great right things, the weightier matters of the law, imbedded in the words and in the life of their Lord.

They found themselves also in the full enjoyment of the most exalted fellowship. The center of interest for them was not in the lamb and the bitter herbs of the old feast, nor in the bread and wine of the new. The center of interest was Christ himself. He proclaimed the gospel to them — he was the gospel. He was God's good news to their inmost souls.

We have sore need of that upper room. The complexity of business life loads the man of affairs with problems in such a way as to almost banish the mood for devotion. The ceaseless round of social gayeties becomes for many a woman a large house all on the ground floor with no rooms abutting on the sky. The elaborate courses of study in high school and college with a hundred other interests on the side often militate against the growth of a definite, clear-cut Christian life for the student. We have constant need of that upper room as a place of spiritual privilege.

When they had finished the meal, Jesus said, "I will

drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God." There was a note of sadness as he contemplated the severance of those dear associations coupled with a note of gladness as he looked ahead to the higher joys of the Messianic Kingdom.

"And when they had sung a hymn, they went out." It was all done decently and in order. The symbols of sacrifice and then the expression of joy! The cross of pain and then the crown of victory! "In some strange, sweet way when in the hour of sacrifice we have drawn the shades to brood in the darkness of our souls, the light of holy joy bursts in and the hand of faith sets all the chords of the heart vibrating with the praise of God."

LXXXII

THE LONELINESS OF CHRIST

Mark 14 : 32-42

"And they came to a place named Gethsemane." It seems to have been an olive orchard, a private inclosure, but during the Paschal season houses and gardens at Jerusalem were open to strangers. There is today a plot of ground just across the brook Kidron surrounded by a wall having within it eight old olive trees. They seem so old that some suppose they are the very trees on which our Lord may have looked. They stand there "in the majesty of their age and the pathos of their decay, the most venerable of their race on the face of the earth, their gnarled trunks and scanty foliage causing them to be regarded as the most affecting of the sacred memorials about Jerusalem."

Here Jesus went the night before his crucifixion to pray. He had seen the hollowness of that popular enthusiasm which on the first day of the week shouted, "Hosanna," and before the week was done swelled the cry that he be crucified. He had seen the deadness of the national church — with all its glorious traditions of divine mercy in the past and with the divine oracles in its hands, it did not know the things that belonged to its peace. He had celebrated the Last Supper with the Twelve, imparting to them of his very life, yet knowing that they would go forth, one to betray him and another to deny him before cock crow. It was an hour when defeat and disappointment seemed to mass themselves above the horizon like

great black clouds shutting out his vision of the stars. He went alone in the darkness to pray.

He took with him into the Garden the three closest friends he had, Peter and James and John, the same three who had been with him on the Mount of Transfiguration and in the chamber of death at Jairus' house, sharing with him many an hour of high privilege and of special intimacy. He said to them, "Tarry ye here and watch, while I go yonder and pray."

You know the feeling. In your own hour of distress when you were racked by pain or torn with mental anguish, it was a source of comfort to know that some one who loved you was near, awake and sympathetic. "We know what a relief it is to see the honest, affectionate face of a menial servant regretting that your suffering may be infinitely above his poor comprehension. It may be a secret which you cannot impart to him or it may be a mental distress which his mind is unable to appreciate, yet still his sympathy in your dark hour is worth a world."

The Master left the three friends to watch while he went a stone's cast into the darkness of the lonely garden to pray. When he returned presently he found them all asleep. How thoughtless and selfish they seemed! He shook his head over the weakness of their devotion. "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" He addressed the leader of the group, "Simon" — using the old name of the fickle, unrenewed man rather than "Peter," the new name of grace, which foretold the final emergence of a man possessed of the steadfast fidelity of a great rock — "Simon, sleepest thou?" There were his three closest friends apparently indifferent to his agony.

He was destined to tread the wine-press alone. His experience is typal and representative — the hard-fought battles of life are commonly fought out alone. The fiercest

struggle comes not where men are marching in long ranks with drums beating, flags flying and shouts of victory bursting from ten thousand throats. The hardest battles are fought where some soul faces its own doubts, its own sins, its own sorrows, its own defeats, struggling with them alone.

Jacob at Jabbok ford was left alone to wrestle all night until the breaking of the day brought a new name and a new nature. Elijah, turning from the fickle people who halted between two opinions, was left alone under the juniper tree to face the apparent defeat of God's cause in Israel. John the Baptist, mighty when he faced the multitudes, was by the wickedness of Herod left to eat out his heart alone in prison — his despair voicing itself in that plaintive query addressed to Christ, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" How much each man of them needed the help of watchful sympathy — and even the Son of Man was not exempt. "Could ye not watch with me?"

But he accepted the inevitable — "Sleep on now and take your rest." The chance to serve him in that hour of sore need was gone, forever gone into what the famous English preacher called "The Irreparable Past." The hour had come when wakening would be of no avail. The door of opportunity was now shut and the three men had failed to go in.

In that hour of loneliness and pain the Master prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." It was a terrible cup that was being put into the hands of one who came craving only the opportunity to preach good tidings to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to bring deliverance to the captives and to set at liberty them that were bruised. His enemies on the morrow would have their way with him as if he were the vilest of men —

as if there were no moral order. They would mock his claims and scorn his leadership; they would spit upon him and nail him to a cross to die between two thieves. His benign nature instinctively cried out, "If it be possible, let this cup pass."

But the cup did not pass — he was constrained to drink it to the last dregs. And in that hour of heartfelt appeal to high heaven, he felt that it would be so. And then at last the prayer came: "Not as I will, but as thou wilt. If this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done." And herein lies the highest answer to prayer — not in patient acquiescence and resignation to something which we are powerless to avert but in high resolve to go forth and do that perfect will now seen and accepted through the clearer light and holier purpose achieved by prayer.

"Prayer is not offered to deflect God's will to yours, but to adjust your will to his," says Francis G. Peabody. "When a ship's captain is setting out on a voyage he first of all adjusts his compasses, corrects their divergence and counteracts the influences which draw the needle from the pole. Well, that is prayer. It is the adjustment of the compass of the soul; it is the restoration from deflection; it is the pointing of it to the will of God. And the soul which thus sails forth into the sea of life finds itself — not indeed freed from all storms of the spirit, but at least sure of its direction through them all."

The claim has been made that if we have faith when we pray, we can get anything we want. Jesus had faith. He prayed, "Let this cup pass from me." It did not pass — he drank it next day upon the cross. But he prayed until he could say, "Nevertheless, if I must . . . not my will but thine be done." The high office of prayer is not to enable a man to stand before God saying, "Not as thou

wilt but as I will." Its high office is to bring a man into such harmony with God that he will say not passively but actively and courageously, " Thy will be done." And that of itself is a mighty answer. What better result could come than for the soul to be made able to stand before the Eternal saying, " Thy will be done."

Jesus looked forward to the time when the clamorous, insistent type of prayer, intent upon securing its own ends, would pass. " In that day ye shall ask me nothing." The petitionary element would be overshadowed by the sense of holy companionship. When a man prays he is in the highest company open to him. The very fact that he is there in the rich enjoyment of such high privilege is in itself a great reward for his action in offering his prayer.

" Arise, let us be going," Jesus said when he had prayed the third time. And he went forth not now to be ministered unto but to minister at the altar of sacrifice, giving his life a ransom for many.

We have no portrait of Jesus of Nazareth. He lived before the days of cameras. How much it would mean if we could actually look upon his face not as outlined by the ecclesiastical imaginings of mediæval artists painting altar-pieces for the churches, but as he was!

If we could take the faces of all the men and women who have entered upon their moral struggles feeling themselves alone but coming through their very agony into a new sense of companionship with the Father; if we could summon all the fathers who have patiently borne with vicious sons that they might win them from their wrong-doings; if we could take all the faithful wives, disheartened but not destroyed by their sense of disappointment, clinging to husbands who had shown themselves unfaithful that they might share with Christ the joy of moral recovery; if we could bring all the people who have been

loyal to their friends through good report and evil report, giving of their best and suffering loss that good might come to those other lives — if we could bring all these faces together and take a composite photograph of them, when the last bit of human sympathy and unselfishness had registered itself upon that sensitive plate, we should have there the perfect face of the Christ.

Dewdrops shine like diamonds in the early morning because they reflect the sun. And human hearts massed together by such experiences in fighting heroically the moral battles of the world, likewise reflect the glory of God as seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

LXXXIII

THE MAN WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN

Matt. 26 : 14-25, 47, 50; 27 : 3-10

The story of Judas is a study in religious privilege. Here was a life admitted into the closest intimacy with the Highest who ever walked the earth, yet going out in the darkness of treachery, remorse and suicide. His fate brings home to every heart an effective reminder that great religious privileges do not insure a man against final spiritual ruin.

"Now the names of the twelve apostles are these — Simon and Andrew; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew; James, the son of Alphæus, and Thaddeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him." He was indeed "one of the Twelve."

We are familiar with all the stock questions. Why did Jesus choose Judas in the first place? Did he know that Judas would prove a traitor? When he found that Judas was playing false why did he not instantly expel him from the company of the Twelve? Did the disciples really believe that he was "a thief" when he complained that the precious ointment was not sold for three hundred pence? Was Judas false from the first, following Christ from some ulterior motive? Was there some redeeming motive underlying his readiness to betray Christ into the hands of his enemies?

It is impossible to dogmatize upon the psychology of a man so far removed from our scrutiny as is Judas. It is impossible for us to judge his acts in any hard and fast

way with such meager data regarding his mental and moral processes. It would seem reasonable to suppose that Judas entered upon his discipleship with as much sincerity as any of the Twelve. It would be a mockery to think that "Jesus continued all night in prayer and when it was day chose" a man who was false at heart in that very hour.

It is plain that in the earlier period of Christ's ministry his fellow-disciples trusted Judas. They elected him treasurer — men do not commonly intrust the money bag to a "suspect." They do not select for Chancellor of the Exchequer a man concerning whose honesty they feel uncertain.

Even after Judas had approached the chief priests and when the thirty pieces of silver were weighing down his pocket as so much lead, the eleven did not suspect him of treachery. When Jesus said at the last supper, "One of you shall betray me," it did not occur to any one of them to say, "Is it Judas?" They were dumbfounded. But every man turned his eyes within, meditating upon the latent possibilities of unfaithfulness in his own heart. Every man of them said, "Lord, is it I?"

The narrative indicates that the definite moral lapse of Judas came near the close of Christ's ministry. Luke says, near the end of his record, "Satan entered into Judas surnamed Iscariot and he went his way and communed with the chief priests how he might betray him." Satan had not been resident in the wretched man's heart during all those years of fellowship with Christ — Luke indicates here a definite lapse. We must believe then that Judas entered upon his high privileges with sincerity and then in the very face of a unique opportunity for spiritual advance, became "the son of perdition."

Did Jesus know when he chose him that Judas would prove false? In the interests of theological theory it has

sometimes been deemed necessary to assert that Jesus knew all things. He expressly disclaimed omniscience. He asked for information and waited to receive it through the natural channels. He disclaimed his knowledge of a certain day and hour — that knowledge belonged only to the Father. Had he known in advance that Judas would show himself a traitor, the original selection would become unreal. He apparently chose him as a man of exceptional ability, giving him the fullest opportunity for life and service of the highest type — it was one of his many ventures of faith and hope and love.

The underlying fault in the man's make-up was a common one with his race — he was mercenary. He was a lover of money more than a lover of God. His first question when he faced the chief priests was, "What will you give me and I will betray him?"

How many times we hear that ugly note in the speech of those ancient Hebrews? "Sell me this day thy birthright" — and taking advantage of his brother's extremity the crafty Jacob got it at a bargain. When Joseph is lying in the pit and the caravan comes along, hear Judah reasoning in this thrifty fashion — "What profit is it if we slay our brother? Let us sell him to the Ishmaelites." Hear Peter with this sordid inquiry on his lips — "We have forsaken all and followed thee. What shall we have therefore?" The Hebrew was prone to have his eye on the main chance. And Judas Iscariot had a Benjamin's portion of that weakness.

How pointed become the warnings of Jesus as to the peril of covetousness when we see Judas standing with the Twelve hearing his Master's words! It may be that Jesus saw the moral twist in the man's nature when he said, "Beware of covetousness — a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." He may

have seen Judas looking greedily at the contents of the well-worn bag when he said, "Provide yourselves bags which wax not old; treasures of heavenly character which fail not." He may have seen this disciple intent upon gain and halting at the parting of the ways when he uttered that searching word — "No man can serve two masters. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

The motives of Judas in betraying his Lord have been rigidly scrutinized. In my judgment we may well believe that the unhappy man did believe that Jesus would in some miraculous way extricate himself from the hands of the soldiers — the subsequent action of Judas indicates as much. And it may be that his worldly mind believed that by his shrewdness he might hasten the setting up of that temporal kingdom at Jerusalem which in his judgment had already been too long delayed. He may have felt that he would be thirty pieces of silver to the good, that Jesus would in the end suffer no hurt, and that out of his plot there might come a swifter consummation of the ambitions of the Twelve touching that temporal kingdom for which they were all looking. This does not in any wise remove or even diminish the moral falsity of Judas, but it does throw light on what may have been his mental processes.

When Jesus did not deliver himself but allowed himself to be put to death in the most cruel and humiliating way, it broke the heart of Judas. This would not have been so in the case of a man cold, insincere and cruel from the start. He came sobbing into the presence of the chief priests with this heartfelt cry, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." When they gave no heed to the moral tragedy of his life, turning away bluntly with that brutal word, "What is that to us?" Judas cast down the thirty pieces of silver and went out to hang himself. He had not meant to destroy the One Perfect

Life the world has ever seen, but greed and stealth led him into sharing in the world's greatest tragedy as a guilty participant.

The spirit of avarice begat a treacherous purpose. The treacherous purpose became the father of an open act of betrayal. The act of betrayal brought in its train an unbearable remorse. And the intolerable remorse induced suicide. It was an ugly flight of steps leading down toward perdition. When once he put his foot fairly and fully on the first step, he went to the bottom.

His bearing in the face of the awful consequences of his deed awakens pity in our hearts. "I have sinned" — the same word which fell from the lips of the prodigal in the presence of a forgiving father. "I have betrayed innocent blood." Innocent blood! It was a tardy but a heartfelt tribute to the moral perfection of the one he had wronged. He hung himself, unable to bear the burden of guilt he now felt. We may well remember that not every man who has preferred silver to Christ or who has sold his Christian principles to the highest bidder has had the grace to show such sense of contrition.

In judging the character of Judas it is wise for us to observe that principle of seriousness and of reserve which found expression in the first chapter of the Acts. "Judas by transgression fell that he might go to his own place." No effort was made to describe or to locate that "place." Well may we paraphrase the lines of Hood touching the wretched woman who had sought refuge from the horror of her evil life in the cold waters of the Thames.

"Owning his weakness,
His evil behavior,
Leaving with meekness
His sins to his Saviour."

"Lord, is it I?" We are glad that each man in that

group thought only of his own liability to fall, casting no eye of suspicion upon the moral prospects of his fellows. "When the wind is rising it is good for each ship at sea to look to its own ropes and sails and not stand gazing to see how ready the other ships are to meet it. We all feel that we would rather hear a man asking anxiously about himself than to see him so sure of himself that the question never occurs to him. We should be surer of his standing firm if we saw that he knew he was in danger of a fall."

"Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. See if there be any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting."

"Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all:—
Close up his eyes and draw the curtains close
And let us all to meditation."

LXXXIV

THE ARREST AND TRIAL OF JESUS

Matt. 26 : 47-68

He was betrayed by a kiss — the sweet token of affection degraded to the basest use! He was taken by men with swords and staves — the very presence of the weapons an insult to the peaceful method of his life. The Master voiced his open resentment of their action. "Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves?" He was seized in the dark, his enemies bearing witness that their foul deed would not bear the light of day.

When his foes first laid hands upon him one of his disciples, the ready, warm-hearted, impulsive leader of the Twelve, began to fight. He whipped out his sword as he had whipped out many an ill-considered word which brought upon him his Lord's rebuke. Before Jesus could remonstrate he had struck a blow, cutting off a man's ear by his ill-directed thrust in the darkness of the garden.

Peter was headed wrong. Not by violence and bloodshed was that Kingdom which is to be an everlasting Kingdom to be established! "Put up thy sword." The weapons of our warfare are not carnal for the destroying of men's lives. They are spiritual — instruction, persuasion, moral appeal, the unconstrained force of holy example — for the saving of men's lives. "Put up thy sword." The Christian world heard that injunction nineteen hundred years ago, but alas (as it has been brought home to us so terribly in these recent months)! even those who in the high places of earth proclaim themselves the chosen of

heaven and the favored partners of the Almighty have not learned that vital word.

"My Kingdom is not of this world," Jesus said, "if it were my servants would fight." The servants of the Roman Empire which was even now laying its sacrilegious hands upon him were accustomed to fight. Might made the only right they respected. But he was the servant of a higher method. He came to establish an order of life where right would constitute the only might; where the final arbitrament would not be that of force.

The Moslem may take the sword — it jars not with the ideals of his faith. He may go forth in fiery evangelism, his weapon in one hand, his Koran in the other, offering the reluctant that fearful option to coerce their acceptance of his creed. But where Christendom takes the sword the inmost spirit of it does in that very act perish by the sword.

The battles have not all been fought. The wars have not all been waged. Stern necessity may thrust upon men of honor the obligation of self-defense or of succor to weaker interests beset by unprincipled force. All this but serves to testify to the moral distance still to be traversed. We have a long and painful road to go in securing the prevalence of those principles which shall usher in the day when swords shall be beaten into plowshares, the bright metal of young manhood shaped into productive rather than destructive forms; when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Then came what a great preacher has called "The Willing Surrender." The Master had swords innumerable and invincible at his command but not one of them would be drawn in his defense. "Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels." He need not rely upon

the puny defense of eleven shuddering men. For every man of them Christ had within call a legion of superhuman defenders able to smite his enemies to the dust. He could — but would not.

"To give up some precious thing which is legitimately yours; to shut your eyes upon visions of glory or safety or luxury which you might make your own without a shade of blame, that is so truly one of the marks of nobility that no man is accounted by the best standards truly noble who is not doing that in some degree. The man who is taking all that he has a right to take in life is always touched with a suspicion and a shade of baseness."

Thus the Master was left without defense by his own high choice. "All the disciples left him and fled." The legions remained unsummoned. He was in the hands of his foes that they might work upon him their own hateful will.

He was taken at once to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. They thought that they were trying him — he was trying them. Jesus before Caiaphas — nay, rather Caiaphas before Jesus. And how sadly Caiaphas fails to stand the test! "It is more than a play upon words to render the verdict that the high priest was a low priest. Low in the mad midnight haste whereby he attempted to hurry his victim to his fate! Low in his methods in securing evidence, caring not for the truth, satisfied with the mere semblance of evidence! Low in his attempt to trick the prisoner into some phrase that might be distorted into cause for condemnation! Low in his effort, by rending his garments dramatically, to force his associates to concur in his denunciation."

And the conduct of the trial — what a grewsome story

it is! "Then did they spit in his face and buffet him. Some smote him saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ — who struck thee." The prisoner today in all Christian lands is treated with decency and respect. This is one of the fair fruits of the order of life introduced by him who took upon his sympathetic heart the sad lot of the accused when he said, "I was in prison and ye visited me."

The right of the accused to have counsel, the removal of any obligation to criminate himself, the parole and probation systems, the indeterminate sentence, the gradual banishment of the grotesque garb and the shaved head having as their object the making of the prisoner contemptible in his own eyes and the eyes of all, the replacing of the spirit of vengeance by the purpose of reformation in prison administration, the humane ministry of Maude Ballington Booth and of all kindred spirits — all these serve to mark the moral distance we have traversed from that rough scene in the court of Caiaphas.

We turn our eyes from the rabble in that trial scene, who were like the chaff which the wind driveth away, to the One who stood like a tree planted by a river of water, bringing forth the fruits of the spirit in due season, the leaves of his matchless life unwithered.

With what calmness and dignity did he bear it all! He was unmoved, untouched by the blows and the spittle, by the words of abuse and the injustice of their accusations. What a plenitude he had of that love which is the fulfilling of the law. He suffered long and was kind. He did not behave himself unseemly. He was not easily provoked. He had the spirit which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. He had the love that never faileth.

To this end had he come into the world that he might bear witness to the truth and manifest the Father. In the

foul surroundings of that rude court no less than in the hour when he utters the matchless sayings in the Sermon on the Mount or stands on Hermon, his face illumined with a glory never seen on sea or land, he will do just that. He will say in the darkest hour of pain or humiliation, " He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

How self-controlled he was — he who felt the moral outrage of the blows, the spittle and the vile words of abuse as none other could! He bore himself in that superb self-restraint which denotes moral grandeur, for greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city.

They could not humiliate him — they did but humiliate themselves in the sight of the ages. He had already humbled himself by taking upon himself the form of a servant and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And by that act of self-renunciation he was exalted until his name is above every name.

He was poor in purse and in earthly friends and in political influence. Among the rabble not one would have counted himself so poor as to have done him reverence. But the Master was rich in principle and in purpose, in the power of moral appeal and in the energy of a holy life. He had riches which they knew not of.

He bore their insults and their inquiries in a majestic silence. He was looking steadfastly not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen, knowing that the things which are seen are temporal, while the things which are unseen are eternal. Finally, when Caiaphas adjured him by the living God to declare whether or no he was the Christ, the Son of God, he broke his silence with a word which has come down through the centuries. It was a word to be heard and heeded forever more. " Thou hast said it. Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

The testimony is all in. His own word was what the lawyers call "the best evidence." The high priest according to rabbinical requirement when blasphemy was proved, rent his garments. The church court preferred its charge and made ready to take the prisoner before Pilate, the Roman official. The Son of Man is already standing within the shadow of the cross, serene, undaunted, confident. He is doing the Father's will; he is manifesting the Father's spirit.

LXXXV

JESUS AND PETER

Mark 14 : 27-31, 53–54, 66-72

What a strange man was this Peter — ardent, impulsive, impetuous! He cannot open his lips without revealing these uncertain qualities. " Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord," he cried at one time, as if thrusting away his only hope of salvation. " Lord, to whom shall we go — thou hast the words of eternal life," he says later, clinging more closely than all the rest. " Thou shalt never wash my feet," he says, protesting against the very idea of having the Lord render that lowly service to him. Then a moment later, fearing the loss of intimate contact with Christ, he cries, " Lord, not my feet only, but my hands and my head."

Here in the lesson we find the same instability. " Though all men should deny thee, yet I will never deny thee." This was his confident boast early in the evening. Then before cockcrow he protested with an oath that he never knew the Master. Everywhere the same impulsive, impetuous vigor, now good, now bad, but always intense!

He reveals it by his actions no less than by his words. He falls asleep on the Mount of Transfiguration when he should have been awake. Suddenly awakened, he plans in his misdirected zeal to build three tents to protect Moses and Elijah and Jesus from the night air. He falls asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane when he ought to have been awake and watching. Suddenly aroused, he draws his sword, and with misdirected zeal slashes off the

ear of a servant who was standing near. He denied his Lord thrice in a night, and then on the Sea of Galilee, learning that Jesus is on the shore, he cannot wait for the beaching of the boat — he leaps into the water and swims ashore to greet his risen Lord.

You may have such an eager, intense, impulsive nature in your Sunday-school class or in your own home. You despair of ever making out of him a quiet, thoughtful, contemplative Christian like John, or an even-tempered, reliable, methodical Christian like Philip. It cannot be done. You need not break your heart about it or worry the life out of that Peter-like soul in the attempt.

" There is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars; and one star differeth from another star in glory." They are all glorious but they all differ. There is one glory about a certain type of Christian character and another distinct glory about a varying type. The ardent, impulsive natures under the influence of divine grace show forth Christian graces " after their kind." The less picturesque but more dependable natures, under the working of the same Spirit, show forth spiritual excellence in their appointed way.

Peter took his first step toward a moral lapse that fateful night by his boastfulness and self-confidence — " Though all should deny thee, yet will not I." " Brag is a good dog but Hold Fast is better " — it is a homely proverb but with meat in it. In statelier fashion the king of Israel said of old, " Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." Let Peter try his full strength in pulling up hill the moral load laid upon him; then it will be in order for him to speak confidently of his prowess.

The Master warned him in the terms of a picture which those outdoor men had witnessed a thousand times on the

hillsides of Galilee. He told them that when the shepherd was smitten the sheep would be scattered. But still Peter loudly affirmed his own steadfastness under fire. "Yet will not I!" Alas, poor Peter!

He had some courage and devotion, for after the arrest of Jesus he did come to the trial before Caiaphas. He followed "afar off" indeed, but he was there when "all the other disciples," according to the synoptic gospels, "had fled." They did not come to the trial at all. He was chary about showing his friendship for the accused; he stood off among the servants, warming himself after the chill of exposure during those hours when he had been asleep in the Garden.

He was suddenly bowled over by an unexpected temptation. He had been sleeping when he should have been watching and praying; now his moral nature was relaxed and the inner fiber of his soul had no power of resistance. One of the maidservants — it may be in no unfriendly spirit — said to him, "Thou also wast with the Nazarene." But Peter replied, "I know not what thou sayest." And he went out into the porch. Then another said of him, "This is one of them." But Peter again denied any affiliation with the party which seemed to be on the wane. Then a moment later a man said to him, "Of a truth thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean" — his speech betrayed him. Peter began to curse and swear. In the name of God he denied any fellowship with Jesus. At that moment the cock crew — and he remembered!

It would seem sometimes that the lower orders of existence are in league and covenant with the Judge of all the earth to bring home to the consciences of sinning men their moral lapses. When Saul told his ugly lie, the sheep which he had promised to slay suddenly bleated out the truth. When Balaam was setting forth to claim "the wages of

iniquity" the dumb ass stubbornly turned aside into the field, then jammed his foot against a stone wall and then fell down altogether, as if to detain him from that fated errand. When Macbeth stole in under cover of darkness to murder the king, "the night was unruly; chimneys were blown down, lamentings were heard in the air and strange screams." And here, punctual to the second, when the third culminating denial fell from the cowardly Apostle's lips, the cock crew as if keeping tryst with the word of the Lord.

"And the Lord turned and looked on Peter." It was only a look, but it was enough. It brought to Peter's mind the warning he had received at the time of his boastful utterance touching the fidelity he would show when the crisis came. It brought to his heart afresh the sense of the Lord's gentleness with his wavering disciple. It brought to his soul a feeling of remorse over his instability and ingratitude. "And he went out and wept bitterly."

In the hour when Peter turned away from his Lord in wicked and profane denial of that holy relationship with which he had been blessed, the Lord turned anew to Peter. The divine compassion took the initiative here as everywhere. "We love him, because he first loved us." "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "No man cometh unto me except the Father in heaven draw him." The first overtures come uniformly from God's side. And with all his fickleness and faultiness Peter had kept his heart so sensitive that one look from his Lord was enough to face him again toward the light.

The gentleness of the divine compassion! The remonstrance of Jesus did not come in hot words of censure or denunciation; it did not come in loud appeal or fervent exhortation for an about face — it came in a look of pitying surprise that this impetuous man could so soon fall

away from his fervent mood of devotion. The Lord was not in the wind. The Lord was not in the fire. The Lord was not in the earthquake. The Lord was in a still, small voice, spiritually efficacious beyond all the more violent expressions of power and purpose.

" Peter went out and wept bitterly." " Judas went and hanged himself." " Each of these men had a chapter in his life which contained the story of a black sin," said Dean Hodges. " There is a difference between the man who betrays and the man who denies his Master, but not a very great difference. Judas went and hanged himself, while Peter went out and wept bitterly, feeling very badly about it. But there is a good deal of difference between putting a handkerchief to one's eyes and putting a rope about one's neck. Ought not Peter to have imitated Judas?

" The question is, What shall a man do who has committed a great sin? Shall he go out and weep bitterly and then try to make up for his offense and be a decent man again? Or shall he go and hang himself? A man can hang himself without a rope. He can go hanged through the rest of a long life; that is, he can make himself absolutely miserable, torture his soul, put his conscience in the rack every night and break his heart on the wheel. He can commit spiritual suicide. Which is the best example — the apostle with the tearful eyes or the apostle with the broken neck? "

The question is soon answered. Remorse and despair may fittingly express a man's abhorrence for his sin. But repentance where it is real has more of worth. It indicates an about face. It paves the way for hope and aspiration. It is more precious than diamonds and rubies, for it foretells the upward movement of a soul which will outlast and outshine them all. Penitence with trust is big with promise.

David was a man after God's own heart, not because he was without fault — David fell into the grossest sin. He was a man after God's own heart because when he fell he got up again, faced toward his Lord rather than away from him. Peter is perhaps the best beloved of all the disciples, not because of any unstained moral excellence, but because his weakness seemed to drive him into closer fellowship with and into a truer dependence upon his Lord.

There lies the source of hope for us all. If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves. But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

LXXXVI

JESUS BEFORE PILATE

Matt. 27 : 11-31; Luke 23 : 1-25

The painter, the poet and the preacher have all tried their hands on this situation. And however they have pictured the outer setting of the principal figures, they have all united in causing the figure of the prisoner to dominate the whole scene. Wherever this stone which the builders refused is placed, there is the head of the corner. Wherever the Son of Man stands, there is the right hand of power!

" Now Jesus stood before the governor " — not to be judged but to judge the haughty official. He stood there to determine what place this Roman officer would thenceforth take in the estimate of the race. And he doomed him to a sorry place. " Suffered under Pontius Pilate " — this is the man's only title to remembrance. The card with which he is ticketed is bordered with black and stained with blood. He won for himself a somber bit of immortality in those moments when the Man of Nazareth stood before him. He knew not that that hour was the most significant hour in his whole career.

With what patient dignity Jesus bore himself before this crafty, wriggling, politic official and in the face of the rabble. " When he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing." " When Pilate said, How many things they witness against thee — he answered not a word." When the governor inquired, " Art thou the king of the Jews? " Jesus replied, " Thou sayest." He bore

himself as one conscious of the fact that the whole proceeding was a travesty. He himself was taking the moral government of the world upon his shoulder as none other ever has.

We are told that at the feast of the passover it was the custom to release one prisoner as an act of mercy upon the demand of the multitude. It was like the custom of having the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts announce the pardon of some criminal on the morning of Thanksgiving Day.

There was one noted prisoner in bonds named Barabbas. He had been a robber. When the multitude came Pilate suggested that he might at their request release Barabbas. "Barabbas or Christ?" he called out to them. It is a rude picture of the eternal option. What spirit is to be set free in the world to work its will upon the lives of men? Shall it be the spirit that goes to kill and to steal and to destroy, or the spirit that comes that men may have life and have it more abundantly? There is never a congregation great or small gathered to hear the gospel which does not have this option put up to them. What moral forces are to be released and made active? Will you liberate Barabbas or will you liberate Jesus?

When the mob called for the release of Barabbas, Pilate was disposed to remonstrate with them. "He knew that for envy they had delivered up Jesus." But the rabble cried the more, "If thou release this man thou art not Cæsar's friend. Every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." And Pilate then asked them, "What then shall I do with Jesus?"

He must have known the futility of submitting a question of right and wrong to an angry mob. The man who would submit a legal question involving the life of a human being to the rabble gathered in a lynching mood is either

a fool or a knave. It might seem from the data before us that Pilate was both.

Pilate saw in Jesus a harmless enthusiast, a dreamer and a visionary, who talked of a kingdom where men did not fight, where power did not rest upon force. He found no fault in him except that he seemed to be utterly impracticable in his method of seeking sovereignty over the lives of men. He would have been glad to let him go but for the fact that it would evidently please the people to have him delivered up to shameful death.

But the Roman official had still some remnant of that sense of justice which the Roman government bred in its representatives. "Why, what evil hath he done?" It would be interesting to make up a composite appraisement of Christ from the estimates placed upon him by outsiders. Pilate said, "I find no fault in him." Pilate's wife called Jesus, "That righteous man." Judas said that in betraying him, he had betrayed "innocent blood." If there had been a moral flaw in Christ, Judas would have detected it. The enemies of Jesus when he hung upon the cross cried out, "He trusted in God." The Centurion said when he had witnessed the death of Jesus upon the cross, "Truly this was the Son of God."

At this point in the proceedings there came a message to the Roman governor from his wife. She had a dream, and dreams in that day were more highly esteemed than now. It was believed that in these interstices of ordinary consciousness when the normal faculties were in a measure suspended, the supernatural found its opportunity and God uttered his voice through dreams. His wife sent to Pilate saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered many things in a dream because of him."

Pilate saw that his remonstrance in nowise affected

the attitude of the mob. He turned a deaf ear to the protest of his wife, grounded as it was in what seemed to him the foolish fears begotten of a woman's dream. He made ready to deliver his august prisoner into the hands of the mob that they might work their will upon him. But first he will wash his hands in showy fashion as if he would by that symbolic act disclaim all share in their bloody business. "He washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man. See ye to it."

They did not shirk the responsibility. Their mad bigotry was ready to go all lengths. "All the people answered and said, His blood be upon us and upon our children." It has been! From that hour there fell a blight upon the religious life of Israel. They lost the right of the line in spiritual leadership which they had held for many glorious centuries. The coldness and the indifference of great sections of Judaism today is one of the burdens which rests heavily upon the hearts of devoted rabbis. It was a fearful undertaking they assumed when they cried, "His blood be upon us," and fearfully have they rendered payment.

But the responsibility could not be shifted thus easily by Pilate's showy action in washing his hands or by that ill-considered word of the people. Pilate stands condemned before the ages on these two counts:

First, he knew Christ to be unworthy of shameful death. He stands condemned by his own lips. "Why, what evil hath he done? I find no fault in this man."

In the second place, he had power to release and to protect Christ, but he failed to exercise it. "I have power to release thee and have power to crucify thee," he said to the Master as he stood there in his tribunal. And when the hour struck he used his power for the impaling of innocence upon the cross.

Crucifixion was a Roman method of execution. The Jews were not allowed under Roman rule to inflict it upon any offender. Their malignity would have been powerless therefore to have brought Jesus to the cross but for the support and co-operation of this Roman official who cared more for the yell of the mob or the smile of Cæsar than for the cause of right. "I find no fault in him — then he delivered him unto them to be crucified." The setting of these two statements in conjunction shows him in the very act of poisoning the stream of justice at its source.

The rabble took swift advantage of Pilate's permission when he released Barabbas and scourged Jesus, delivering him to the people to be crucified. They repeated all the insults of the ecclesiastical court convened before Caiaphas. They put upon Christ a scarlet robe — but in mockery of his kingly claims. They placed upon his head a crown — but it was formed of rough and painful thorns. They placed in his hand the scepter of authority — but it was a poor broken reed which they gave him as if to flaunt the idea of his assertion of power.

How blind they were! Here was one, the date of whose birth would become the starting point from which all the leading nations of earth would speedily come to reckon their time! Here was one who would change the moral history of the race, replacing its low, imperfect ideals by the august standards he imposed upon its spiritual life! Here was One destined to reign in the hearts of men and in the spiritual advance of the world until he should have put all enemies under his feet! And the only thing that crowd in Pilate's courtroom could find to do was to mock these valid claims with studied insult.

The question which fell lightly from Pilate's lips has come to be the great question of the ages. It must be answered by every individual. His own destiny turns upon

the answer he gives. It must be answered by the courses which the civilizations of the world take, and the stability or the instability they shall show will turn upon the reply they make. "What then shall I do with Jesus, who is called the Christ?"

"Shall I reject him and live precisely as if I had never heard his name?" asked William M. Taylor, "or shall I accept him as my Saviour and obey him as my Lord? I must do the one or the other. Yet how many are seeking like Pilate to evade the question? Let me give you one parting word — it is this: You cannot evade the decision but be sure that you *look at the Christ* before you give him up!"

LXXXVII

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

Mark 15 : 21-41; Luke 23 : 39-43

" There they crucified him." When we have read these opening words in the passage the whole picture is before us. It utters its own message. It seems almost impertinent to speak about it — let us stand in reverent silence before the Cross allowing it to speak for itself!

There are many events in the life of Jesus and many of his sayings which are only recorded in a single Gospel. But when we come to the crucifixion we have a full account of the matter in each of the four Gospels. It would seem as if each man were conscious of his inability to bear such a burden of responsibility alone — he summons the other three to aid him. And each one brings in some record of the event or some utterance of Christ to supplement the work of the others.

In the passages to be studied here we have these several steps in the progress of the dread event noted.

Jesus was led to a place known as " Golgotha " to be crucified between two thieves. It was customary to require the condemned man to bear his own cross to the place of execution. But owing to the unusual weight of this cross or to the broken physical strength of Jesus after the ordeal he had passed, they impressed a Cyrenian whose name was Simon to bear the cross.

" There they crucified him and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left." He was hung up between two thieves. " It was part of his humiliation

that he did not suffer alone," said Phillips Brooks in a notable sermon. "Crucifixion was terrible and disgraceful enough in itself, but if Jesus had hung upon his cross with nothing near him to disturb the impression of his calm serenity and innocence, it might well have happened that the people who stood and watched would have lost sight of the disgrace and would have felt the majesty of the sacrifice. Already that place of suffering might have seemed as glorious as it has seemed to the world since. But as it was they went to the prison and dragged out two wretched culprits who were waiting for their doom. That there might be no doubt about the disgracefulness of the Saviour's sufferings, they hung him between two thieves."

He was offered the stupefying drink and refused it. The humane women of that day were accustomed to prepare a drink made of wine mingled with myrrh and to offer it to those undergoing crucifixion to make them less sensible of their pain. It was an early and rude form of anæsthetic designed to modify the sharpness of physical agony.

"But he received it not." He will not shrink from any pain which the obscurest slave might be compelled to undergo. He will face death with all his sensibilities and mental faculties alert. He will be ready with unclouded vision to behold the opportunities for redemptive service which may open before him even in that dread hour when he hangs upon the cross.

His garments were parted among the soldiers who "cast lots upon them, what each should take." The garments of the condemned formed one of the perquisites of the soldiers told off for the grewsome task of executing criminals. And here in the presence of the most significant

event in the moral history of mankind these men whose eyes were holden sat down to throw dice for the choice among the clothes of one whom they esteemed but an unfortunate Galilean peasant. The Master was compelled in his closing hours to look upon a group of men who cared more for his garments than for his gospel; they were more intent upon possessing what he had worn than upon possessing the spirit that was in him. Their action drove yet other nails into his sensitive nature.

He prayed for his enemies. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." His mercy reached unto the clouds and it touched the lowest levels ever reached by human sin. His patient forbearance knew no bounds.

He had taught his disciples to "love their enemies." He loved his own enemies. He bade them, "Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." In that dread hour he showed the world that the word he uttered had become flesh in his own practice. He himself could bless them that cursed him and do good to those who showed him their hate. He was indeed perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect. His great ideals as they stood declared in the body of his teaching had become accomplished facts in his own spiritual achievement.

He instructed and forgave the penitent thief. Helpfulness was his daily, hourly habit. He could not pass through a crowded street without having some suffering woman touch the hem of his garment for her recovery. He could not enter Jericho without picking a sinful man out of the crowd, leaving him renewed, a son of Abraham to whose heart salvation had come. He could not suffer upon the cross without carrying a penitent robber in his arms into Paradise.

"One of the malefactors railed on him." But one of them looked upon him with appeal in his eyes. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom." When a man whose past life has been evil reaches that point of penitent trust where he can say as much as that, he is not far from the Kingdom of God. "In the wild storm of obloquy and derision this robber utters one sweet, reverent word — Lord. Above the flood of blasphemy and execration which dashes round the cross this robber lifts his head and acknowledges allegiance to the King! To call a dying man a King and to ask him for a favor on the other side of death, that is faith indeed."

He had an inscription placed above his head. There was an inscription written in Hebrew and in Latin and in Greek, so that all these diverse races and forms of interest might read and understand, "This is the King of the Jews." The four Gospels vary in their statements as to the exact wording of the inscription, but all agree that it contained this statement, "The King of the Jews," as indicating the cause of his execution.

In summoning three of the leading languages of earth in that day to bear witness to the royalty of the one who hung upon the cross; in summoning three forms of civilization, the Roman with its genius for political administration and material development, the Greek with its genuis for philosophy and art and the Hebrew with its genius for ethics and religion, to confess the Kingship of Jesus, they wrote more wisely than they knew. The One who hung there in apparent helplessness has become in all these lines of human advance the King of kings and Lord of lords.

He was derided by the people and by the chief priests. They were powerless to open the eyes of the blind or to

unstop the dull ears of the deaf as he had been doing; they were unable to preach good tidings to the poor or to bind up the broken-hearted or to set at liberty them that were bruised. But they could step up and spit upon him as he hung helpless under their insults. They could stand off and wag their heads, saying, " Ha! he saved others — let him save himself! "

Here are yet other nails driven ruthlessly into his heart which even in that awful hour was still throbbing with tenderness! He came unto his own and his own made this return! He went about doing good and this was the measure of their appreciation! He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

He made his heartfelt appeal to the Father. " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? " His words are the opening words in the twenty-second Psalm, and we are to interpret them in the light of the whole spiritual utterance to be found in that song of Israel. When President McKinley on his deathbed murmured, " Nearer, my God, to thee," it was manifest that the whole message of that noble hymn was in his mind, yielding its peace and comfort in his last hours.

In like manner we are to think of Christ as having in mind the full message and meaning of that ancient Psalm. We shall in this way reach a surer interpretation of the meaning of this cry than by seeking to inquire how far the Father had withdrawn from the Son the sense of his gracious presence.

His enemies even derided that sacred word. " He calleth Elijah," they said seeking to perpetrate a rude witticism upon the verbal resemblance of his cry, " Eli " (My God), and the name of the great prophet. " Let us see whether

Elijah cometh to take him down." In their sinful eyes nothing was revered.

He yielded up his life with the words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He met the tempter in the wilderness with words of Scripture on his lips. Now he keeps the faith and finishes his course with the word of God still upon his lips and in his heart as an abiding source of power.

Let his Cross in its august dignity, in its infinite simplicity, utter its own great lesson. "Speculation as to the relation of the death of Christ to the Deity and to the moral order has been common and useless. Salvation is as mysterious as the action of the elemental forces. How gravitation operates no one knows! How the energy in a sunbeam is communicated to a flower no one understands! How electricity can be manipulated so that a man may hold a pen in Chicago and write his signature in New York baffles imagination! And until such facts are explained no one need be dazed at the mystery of spiritual life. The way of the cross is the way of victory."

LXXXVIII

" HE IS RISEN "

Mark 16 : 1-8; Matt. 28 : 11-15

The last words in the fifteenth chapter of Mark and the first words in the sixteenth are suggestive. " He rolled a stone against the door of the tomb and Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid." " And when the Sabbath was past Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices that they might come and anoint him." The last eyes of love to look upon the laying of the Saviour's body in the tomb on the evening of what we call " Good Friday " were the eyes of devoted women. And the first approach to the empty tomb on what has become to us " Easter Day " was made by devoted women.

They brought spices to anoint the dead body of him whom they had loved. This gracious action revealed their affection, but it showed how empty were their hearts of faith. The fact of his rising from the dead had yet to be established not in minds credulous and anticipant of such an event; it had to be established in the minds of those who were " slow of heart to believe."

The women said, as they walked in the uncertain light of that early dawn, " Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulcher? " The physical obstacle between them and the object of their desire seemed to them impassable. But they found the stone rolled away. The physical obstacles between their heavy hearts and the Easter hope of triumphant and advancing life had been

removed by the might of life itself. "It was not possible that he should be holden of death."

The resurrection of Christ and the whole claim of immortal life have been overlaid with assertions which tend to make it impossible, if not actually grotesque, to many discriminating minds. The early church fathers, many of them, taught the resurrection of the flesh, insisting upon the recovery of the very particles, the hair, the teeth, the nails and other specified organs of the body. They made themselves unwittingly the enemies of well-reasoned faith.

"The view now offered is substantially this: the resurrection is *from the dead* and not *from the grave.* It takes place at death, and is general in the sense of being universal. The spiritual body, or the basis of the spiritual body, already exists, and this is the body that is raised up, God giving it such outward form as pleaseth him."

We need not concern ourselves with questions touching the precise mode of the resurrection of Jesus. "With what sort of body did he come?" we are asked. "Could he eat and drink in his risen body?" When I had preached a sermon on the Easter hope I once received a letter from a woman who possessed more of the spirit of inquiry than of good sense, asking "Where did Christ get the clothes he wore in his risen state?"

How far beside the mark is all this! We may well reply, as Bishop Whipple did to a young novitiate who, in an ambitious confirmation sermon, had gotten in where the water was over his head. The bishop asked the young preacher at the close of the service, "What does the Bible say about all that?" "It says nothing at all," the young man promptly replied. "Then would it not be as well to follow so good an example?"

The silences of Scripture are often as significant as its speech. We are not favored with such data as would

warrant us in undertaking to build a system of affirmations touching the mode of Christ's resurrection or the particular properties of the "spiritual body." The great, abiding, significant fact is that "*HE ROSE.*" He was not there in the place of death where the women sought him. He was and is and is to be for evermore in the realm of life. He is the risen, reigning, triumphant Christ. Here is the kernel of our Easter message; all the rest is wrapping!

But intellectual difficulties present themselves at once to the serious mind in some such form as this: "What can assure the modern man, made aware of the uniformity of nature and versed in the history of other religions which tell of trances, visions and apparitions, that the story of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth stands unique and impregnable, not to be dislodged by scientific assault, not to be remanded to the realm of myth and legend?"

Here are the three main considerations which afford me the most assurance:

The tomb was empty. The dead body was placed there, and a guard was set to prevent imposture; but in spite of everything, when the third day dawned the body was gone. If the body had been there the enemies of the Christian cause would have triumphantly produced it as a complete and final refutation of the claim, which the apostles began to make at once, that he had risen from the dead. The producing of that body, slowly undergoing corruption in the tomb, would have put a quietus on the whole movement. It would have made unnecessary Saul's trip to Damascus and all the other desperate efforts to stamp out the sect which built squarely upon the claim that Christ had risen. But the body was not to be found; the tomb was empty.

We find men who had given up all hope (saying sadly,

"We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel," and returning to their fishing), somehow changed into triumphant believers. They were transformed from despondent pessimists, whose dead hopes were sealed up in the sepulcher of Joseph of Arimethea, into sturdy apostles of a living faith in a risen Lord.

I have read the labored efforts of men to throw light upon this psychological and moral problem — some of them made by men who apparently find it easy to believe almost anything except the plain statements of the four Gospels — and I cannot for myself find any sufficient cause for that transformation except the solid, veritable fact that Christ rose from the dead and certified this truth to the consciousness of those doubting men by appearing to them alive.

We find further confirmation in the blessing of spiritual efficacy placed steadily and squarely upon the positive rather than upon the negative claim touching the resurrection of our Lord. The men who for centuries have been industriously attempting to show that Jesus did not rise from the dead have not been able to show in themselves or in the feeble following they have gained that measure of moral passion, of spiritual energy, of capacity for heroic self-sacrifice in the cause of righteousness, which habitually attend the preaching of a risen Lord. "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" Are the worthiest and most enduring moral results the fruitage of illusion and falsehood, while spiritual feebleness attends the proclaiming of that which is true?

When we study the miracles of Jesus it is well to make our approach through a previous study of his own person. We shall find awakened in our minds a certain anticipation that to such a personality as Jesus the great natural order which enfolds us may have had a response to make altogether unique.

It is well also to make our approach to a study of the narratives of the resurrection through the painstaking study of the words, the deeds, the life quality of him concerning whom this astonishing claim is made, "Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?" When we have had opened to us the previous records concerning him, and have passed in review the record of the unmistakable impress he has made upon the higher life of the race in all the centuries since, we find our hearts burning within us with a mightier and more radiant expectation.

The problem of personal immortality has another aspect. How conscious life can leave the body (with whose cerebral organization it has steadily been associated) to be resolved into dust in the slow processes of the cemetery or the swifter processes of the crematory, and still maintain its conscious self, becomes to certain minds an objection insuperable.

But the sum of all these physical processes does not give us the fact of consciousness in the first place. This is one of the commonplaces of an accurate psychology. When I hold my hand before my eyes and move my fingers I am aware that I am observing that which is external to my real consciousness. If I have the benefit of the X-ray I can watch the movement of the articulations of the wrist and hand, I can see the two bones of the forearm and note the circulation of the blood in the arteries and veins. Suppose I had an X-ray sufficiently powerful to enable me to study the atomic changes and molecular movements within the brain which accompany the changing moods of my inner consciousness as I pass from anger to love or from joy to sorrow. In that case as I turned the X-ray upon my brain and studied in the mirror these various atomic changes and molecular movements, who would be

doing the watching? Not the brain itself, for the brain is the object being observed and reflected upon by the inner consciousness. The sum of all the physical processes does not give us the fact of consciousness. The personal consciousness transcends the whole physical framework.

We can readily believe therefore that the destruction of these physical organs and processes does not necessarily involve the destruction of personal consciousness. The consciousness continues manifesting itself in some new and altered form. We have borne the image of the earthy. We shall also as conscious living factors in the life of the universe bear the image of the heavenly.

It would be impossible for me to retain my faith in God without maintaining also a glad, confident hope of immortal life. Let Theodore T. Munger speak on this point; his splendid words are, I trow, but an echo of what he would say today from that serener height where he now walks:

"Why should love allow the end of what it loves? Why should a father rear children till their love for him has bloomed into full sweetness, and then dig graves into which he thrusts them while their hearts are springing to his and his name trembling upon their lips? If death ends life, what is this world but an ever-yawning grave in which the loving God buries his children with hopeless sorrow, mocking at once their love and hope and every attribute of his own nature? Divine as well as human love has but one symbol in language — *forever!*"

LXXXIX

THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Luke 24 : 13-35

" The eight miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus have more of high and tender humanity in them than any similar distance on the face of the earth." There is a simple, homespun friendliness in this Easter story. The glory of the life eternal walks along a common road where the wind blows the dust in its face; it sits at table in a poor man's house revealing itself in the breaking of bread.

The two men who walked that day to the village called Emmaus were not apostles like Peter and John, destined to have churches innumerable named after them and to have their names inscribed on the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem. They were just plain people like ourselves, who walk and talk, wonder and think, become perplexed and troubled, and are in consequence " sad." And the Lord of Life joins these little groups of common people, interpreting to them aright the meaning of human existence until their hearts burn within them as they behold the glory of it.

Their hearts were heavy and their mood was somber. They could not keep the grief they felt out of their faces even on the public highway. They were noticeably sad as they walked and " communed together." They were making their journey and taking their way into the unknown years that lay ahead " in a world with no Christ in it, or with only a dead Christ in it." No wonder they were sad! All the discouraged and disheartened wayfarers who take the road in that mood are (underneath that gay exterior they may seek to show) inexpressibly sad.

"We were hoping," they said — "we were hoping that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel, but the chief priests and our rulers condemned him to death and have crucified him." How our own hearts answer to it all! "We were hoping" — fill in the rest of the sentence from your own story of disappointment! We were hoping that these children of ours should have been the chief joy of our hearts and the main support of our failing interest as the day of life should wear toward evening, but now — We were hoping that this high measure of success and prosperity to which we have been giving of our best strength should be an unfailing source of peace, but now evil days have come when we have no pleasure in them and the pitcher of our joy is broken at the fountain.

It is a long, weary, footsore, heavy-hearted procession which winds its way from the city of busy activity toward some quiet spot like Emmaus, reminiscent, troubled, saddened. They are "slow of heart to believe" what the prophets of faith have spoken. They are reluctant about recognizing the truth that life enters into its glory by the pathway of self-sacrifice. Their eyes are holden and they do not see what rewarding fellowships are open to them as they travel the well-known road of common experience.

The two men found a certain human relief in talking freely with the sympathetic fellow-traveler who "drew near and went with them." They recounted the strange experiences of the dark days through which they had just passed. They brought forth without the least reserve their dearest hopes and their profoundest disappointments. They spoke of a certain hearsay which had come to them touching the possible dawn of a brighter day, but it was only the word of "certain women" and might be but the eager, unwarranted desire of the more intuitive feminine mind. They spoke of an effort made to run down the

truth of this report — they had gone to the sepulcher of the one they had loved, " but him they saw not."

There was the key to their whole mood! " Him they saw not." The earth is another place when it is seen to have a heaven above it. The lives of the children of men are transformed when it is known that they have a Heavenly Father behind them. All the roads men travel in weariness would be as radiant pathways of light did they see the One who appeared that day as the two men neared Emmaus.

When the risen Christ joined them he gave them what William H. Strong has called " the threefold assurance." He gave them " the witness of the hand." " He was known of them in the breaking of bread." Some familiar gesture as he took the loaf and broke it before the meal uttering the common word of thanksgiving revealed him. He gave them " the witness of the head." " Beginning at Moses he expounded to them in the Scriptures the things concerning himself " until their minds saw how natural and inevitable it was that the Christ should enter into his glory through suffering. He gave them " the witness of the heart " as their inmost feeling rose and answered to his call when he made his appeal for their trust. " Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way and opened to us the Scriptures."

He gave them food and light and warmth, these three. He manifested himself to them in the breaking of bread, feeding their wearied strength into newness of vigor so that they walked back to Jerusalem that night to tell the other disciples what they had seen. He fed their minds with a new understanding of the best that had been seen and felt and said by their own prophets. The two men began to live afresh by the power of great ideas. He fed their hearts with that depth and glow of feeling out of

which come the impulses which carry men along the high road of common experience into the richer meaning and beauty of earthly existence. Food, light, warmth, these three! And the greatest of these is that deep unstudied consciousness of well-being resisting all efforts at final analysis or formal statement, but experienced by those whose lives are hid with Christ in God.

The hearts of the two men answered to him long before their lagging minds had puzzled out the intellectual implications of that rich and sweet experience. And the heart has its rights no less than the head. Alas for us all if we had nothing but bodies to eat and drink with as do the beasts that perish! And alas for us if we were nothing more than the curious gray convolutions which make up the human brain with no faculties which transcend the operations of an intellectual machine! We are souls, with all the full capacities of faith and hope and love, made to wear the likeness and image of the Eternal. And when our souls burn within us, deep answering to deep, under such messages as that which fell that Easter Day from the lips of the Lord of Life, may we not boldly trust the testimony of this deeper witness to the truth!

"He was known to them in the breaking of bread." He entered upon all those homely experiences that he might sympathetically taste the human situation at all points for every man. He first "manifested his glory" so that his disciples "believed on him" with a firmer, richer, warmer faith by making wine for a wedding where the refreshments had unexpectedly failed. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee." Now at the close of his earthly ministry he will make manifest his glory and cause his disciples to believe on him in the breaking of bread at the end of their weary walk.

We value all this, but his supreme appeal is made to

the religious consciousness which glows with an unwonted radiance at his approach. The One who sets you free to aspire for the Highest, the One who causes the noblest ideals you ever behold to rise before you like the sun shining in his strength, the One who causes your will to leap like a strong man coming out of his chamber to run a race, this is the Lord whom you confess in the exercise of your highest power as the Lord of Life.

The hearts of the two men were so gladdened by what they had experienced along the road that they would retain the author of their blessings with them at least over night. "Abide with us for it is toward evening and the day is far spent." They would never have made bold to invite Pilate the Roman Governor had he suddenly appeared on the road to Emmaus. They would never have ventured upon an invitation to such an one as Caiaphas, who was High Priest that year. The heads of Church and State would have frightened the two plain men from any such offer of hospitality.

But the One who from that hour was taking the moral government of the world upon his shoulder had shown himself so sympathetic in his familiar contact with their heart's needs that they would have him at their table. "And he went in to tarry with them and sat at meat with them and took bread and blessed it and brake and gave to them." He was made flesh and went about among men full of grace and truth.

"As that day was, so may each life be," is the prayer of Dr. George A. Gordon. "The morning heaviness, the walk and the human relief, the divine companion and interpretation, the full and mighty answer of the heart, the evening with the risen Christ standing in its reddening glow and peace — such were the supreme things in that great day."

XC

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Matt. 28 : 16-20; Luke 24 : 36-49

"The eleven" — how full of painful reminiscence and suggestion is the sound of this strange number now applied to the company of disciples! "The eleven disciples went into Galilee unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshiped him — but some doubted." It was in the face of a reluctant, questioning mood that the risen Lord established the truth of his claims. There in little insignificant Galilee with that magnificent reference to the authority given him in heaven and on earth, he commissioned his faithful followers for the wider service.

"Go ye into all the world," he said. He had never really traveled abroad. In his infancy we are told that he had been carried once across the borders of Egypt. In his ministry he had once crossed the boundary into Phœnicia. But his life was spent and his work was done in a country smaller than the state of New Hampshire. Yet he had "the world view" of which John R. Mott speaks so often and so well. He lived "in the vision and service of great ideals."

"Go ye into all the world." The One who is more widely known than any other in history is speaking here. He is planning an enterprise world-wide in its scope. He is thinking of that day when all the nations of earth which really count will be dating their history and their correspondence, their contracts and their daily papers, from

the day of his birth. "1917," we write it now every day in the week. It is that long since he was born in Bethlehem.

He was so tall when he stood up that he could see a long way off. He makes his plans in seven figures, as one might say — he seems to think more readily in millions than in dimes. "Disciple all nations," he said. "Repentance and remission of sins shall be preached in my name unto all the nations."

"Beginning at Jerusalem!" Begin where you are! The place to begin this world-wide, age-long enterprise was right where they stood. Go into all the world finally but begin here. The place to inaugurate any great movement, even though it is to clasp the whole round world in its beneficent embrace and move in majestic fashion down the ages, is not away yonder somewhere in the distance, but right here where a finer spirit of fidelity and consecration may enter at once upon its glorious career.

How faithfully the disciples observed this counsel! When the command came, "Go ye into all the world," they did not begin by sending one man to the north on a camel and another to the south with his donkey and having another take ship to sail west. They gathered the believers who were within reach — only a dozen or so of them at first it seems from the narrative — and went into an upper room to hold a prayer meeting.

This little company of believers who were "beginning at Jerusalem" continued in prayer and supplication in one place, with one mind and one accord, for days. When the right moment came the spokesman of the group, whose name was Peter, stood up and voiced their conviction and their aspiration in a notable sermon. Then came the outpouring of the Spirit from heaven and a great response from the people. It resulted in that glorious ingathering

on the day of Pentecost. Many were added to the Lord because they were being saved and the world-wide movement we call "Christianity" was under way. It began right because those men started in where they were in the city of Jerusalem.

The religion of Christ, according to our faith, is the final and absolute religion. It is religion universal coming to clear self-consciousness and to effective vigor first in that nation providentially prepared for it and then in all the nations embraced within its missionary activity. It shows itself competent to offer satisfaction for the moral aspirations of those who are near and of those afar off. It asserts its unique and superior claims, not by crushing or denying the worth of all other religious movements; it follows rather the method of its Master in that it finds room within its sympathy for all the yearnings and discoveries of those non-Christian faiths and then rejoices to supplement their incompleteness. It comes not to destroy but to fulfil.

The uniqueness of the religion of Christ which underlies our world-wide missionary effort is no mere dogmatic assertion springing from mere pride in our own faith. It can be well sustained by thorough, competent study in comparative religion. There are three distinctive characteristics of our Christian gospel resting for their final warrant upon the revelation God made of himself in Jesus Christ.

First, the perfection of its ethical conception of God with the revelation of the divine in Jesus Christ as a historical basis for its thought. The hideous idols with their grotesque faces reveal the tendency of rude men to worship that which is seen to be non-human. The gigantic images of Babylon and Assyria, the huge figures of Buddha in Japan and the pantheistic identification of the material universe itself with God, all testify that multitudes of

men have been moved to prostrate themselves before that which was simply colossal. The Moslem worship of Allah seen as "Absolute Will," but in such hardness and isolation as to lack the qualities necessary for moral perfection, illustrates the adoration of sheer Force. Jesus rendered the race his most conspicuous service in that he shewed us "The Father." "To us there is but one God, the Father."

In the second place the conception of salvation as the complete enrichment and perfecting of human personality with the life of Jesus as a historical basis embodying this perfection. The ascetic idea of salvation as the deliverance of a certain section of the life from evil at the expense of other normal interests prudently sacrificed to the greater good, no longer stands. Ye therefore shall be perfect, round, entire, even as your Father in heaven is entire. The Christian offer of salvation insures a moral personality ennobled and enriched according to the measure of the stature of full manhood in Christ Jesus.

And finally the hope and confidence in the work of establishing the perfect Kingdom of God upon earth with the words of Jesus and the record of human redemption accomplished through him thus far as a historical basis for such confidence. The words, "Thy kingdom come," addressed to the Eternal God in firm expectation that at last they will not be left unanswered indicate no paring down of the world's evil to more respectable proportions, no easy compromise with the passions of men — they anticipate the transformation of this earthly life until through the complete sway of the divine Spirit it has become indeed the Father's perfect Kingdom.

The importance of sound and reasonable convictions as to the unique character and the absoluteness of the religion of Jesus can scarcely be overstated. It is not enough that our acceptance of Christianity should rest on

the accident of birth or the happy fortune of early training; it should stand also upon that intelligent comparison and rational selection which having proved all things holds fast that which is good, supremely good. If its exponents are to go forth to victorious effort among the non-Christian races they must be re-enforced by an inwrought conviction that they bear with them the supreme word of God to man. They must go as confident ambassadors, certain that the moral government of the world is to be upon the shoulder of him whom they proclaim.

When the returns are all in from an exhaustive study of comparative religion, the hard fact stands that the Christian religion alone is furnishing the necessary moral impetus for a steadily advancing civilization. Its ability to render this service springs from the strength and the breadth of its convictions and from the sense of divine helpfulness in which it enables the believer to stand. And these convictions are no mere dream of some brighter hour — they rest back upon the words, the life and the subsequent spiritual achievements of Jesus Christ as a sufficient historical basis.

What a changed attitude has come toward the whole work of foreign missions within the last ten years. The testimony of Christian statesmen like Sir Edward Grey and William H. Taft to the power of the missionary in solving problems of state among backward peoples; the founding of well-equipped departments of missionary training in connection with the great universities and theological schools; the enlistment of men of first-rate capacity, lay and clerical, for the furtherance of the missionary enterprises of the churches; the magnificent enrollment of the choicest young men and young women from the colleges and universities by the Student Volunteer Movement — all these testify to the larger place which the great com-

mission, "Go ye into all the world," has today in the thought of Christendom.

Come! Follow! Abide! Go! These four crucial words from the lips of the Master indicate the order of experience and of procedure for his disciples. They had for three years been followers — now they were to be leaders in spiritual effort.

And the essential method is also here indicated. "Ye shall be witnesses." They were to be not poets nor philosophers nor scientists nor even orators, but witnesses to what they had seen and heard and felt of the divine glory manifesting itself in the spiritual recovery of men. In that high mood bearing their testimony they went forth as participants in a movement universal in its scope and enduring as time.

XCI

"HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN"

Luke 24 : 50-53; Acts 1 : 1-11

Here is the last scene in the earthly history of our Lord! He has held his last conference with his disciples. He has placed in their hands and upon their hearts the great commission. He is now to be parted from them.

Where does he go for this tender, significant farewell? Not to Bethlehem, where he was born, nor to Nazareth, where he grew up. Not to Mt. Hernon, where he was transfigured before them, nor to Calvary, where he suffered on their behalf. "He led them out as far as Bethany and blessed them; and while he blessed them he was parted from them and carried up into heaven." He goes to Bethany, where the home was — the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, the home which had sheltered and comforted him in those weary days when he had nowhere to lay his head.

How he honored the home, the earliest, the simplest, the most fundamental of all our human institutions! His first miracle was wrought in a home, at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. He framed the main essentials of his teachings in the language of the home. When we pray we say, "Our Father." Repentance is the act of a homesick soul saying in the far country of evildoing, "I will arise and go to my Father." Men enter the Kingdom by "becoming as little children." The sense of duty is the feeling that one must be about his Father's business. Heaven is "My Father's house" where the many mansions offer room for all the Father's children.

The atmosphere of that home on the slopes of Olivet has made the very name of " Bethany " as sweet as a psalm. " On the preservation of the home depends the safety of the republic," said one of our wisest statesmen recently. " Citizenship and character are murdered in the tenements for the lack of homes," said Jacob Riis. The Christian life goes down in defeat in many a soul, say all the religious leaders, for the lack of a home atmosphere making possible its normal growth.

Men have gone to battle in all the centuries " for their homes and firesides." It remains to be seen what they will do for the sake of a hot air register in a boarding house or the steam radiator in an apartment hotel for bachelors. It is certain, however, that already the decay of home life in our great cities has been to the detriment of all those vital forces which make for social progress.

There at Bethany where the home was we read that " a cloud received him out of their sight." The cloud has remained. We may ask a host of questions and find ourselves groping in the mist. " How did he rise? To what height was he visible? Where did his body go? What became of his garments? " The writers of the New Testament did not undertake to answer any of these questions. They personally sought to withdraw the attention of men from this mysterious event and fix it upon the spiritual activities of the apostles who set about the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

" Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? " It was a natural attitude — their eyes were on Christ. He was the supreme object of their interest and affection — why should they not stand gazing upon him whenever opportunity offered?

But the time had come for an advance. This was to be Ascension Day in their spiritual history. And when

we speak of "ascension," we use language in its popular rather than in its scientific sense. There is really no "up" or "down" in this wide, roomy universe where we find ourselves. If you went from here to the moon which you saw shining overhead last night, you might call it "going up to the moon." But when you reached the moon and looked back, you would not be looking down. There, hanging above you in your sky, would be the huge bulk of this old earth. There is no absolute "up" or "down."

When we speak of "the ascension of Christ," therefore we do not mean that he went up and up and up, until at last he arrived, no one knows where. We mean that he withdrew his visible, local, tangible presence from the eyes of men. He went into that unseen world of spiritual forces which are everywhere and forever effective.

The ministry of Jesus was brief — it was contained in only three short years. His entire earthly career covered only three and thirty years — the thirty years lost in obscurity except for one glimpse of him at his birth and another glimpse when he was taken as a boy to the Temple. It was never intended that somewhere on earth there should be permanently a local visible presence on which men might gaze as forty centuries have gazed upon the Pyramids. He walked among us for a brief hour, showing us his face of moral interest, reaching out his hand of fellowship, tasting the human situation for every man, and then he was gone. He had withdrawn into that unseen world which is eternal.

His ascension therefore meant the lifting of his principles, his attitudes, his spiritual energies into a world of permanence where they could be seen with the eye of faith and enjoyed by the responsive soul through all the years to come. It meant the exaltation of that local presence into a universal presence capable of realization anywhere.

Wherever two or three of his friends are sympathetically agreed upon the accomplishment of the high ends he had in view, there he is manifest in their midst.

His disciples at Bethany became eye-witnesses of the beginning of that vast process. There gazing into heaven they saw the inception of that mighty movement of thought and feeling which would at last disciple all nations baptizing them into all the divine helpfulness of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

"As ye have seen him go, so in like manner ye shall see him come." When? Within a few days. The disciples who heard these words went into an upper room and prayed until they were all filled with the Spirit that was in him. They went out and began to speak with other tongues and with new effectiveness — it had never been like this with them before. Men of all lands gathered at Jerusalem heard them speak, each one in his own tongue, the message of eternal life. Without leaving the city the disciples were already going into all the world with the gospel and were conscious that he was with them always in that blessed work.

When Jesus walked in visible form in Palestine it was inevitable that Christian interest should be localized. His disciples would feel that where he was, the divine presence could best be realized. "When they were in his visible presence, they felt themselves nearer to him than when they were away — they could not help it." His ascension would mean the transfer of their interest from a local, visible presence to a universal, invisible presence to be enjoyed everywhere.

"It could not be that living among men he should just live on forever, never allowing his ministry to pass beyond the imperfection of the visible, always drawing the hosts of believers to Jerusalem, in place of lifting them up to

his spiritual home in holiness. So there came a disappearance which was not death — a disappearance strange and mysterious but not more wonderful than had been the life and character of him who so departed."

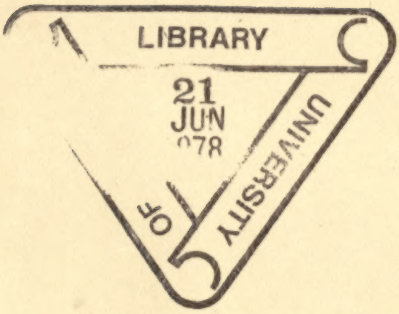
It helped the disciples to believe. When Jesus was sitting in some narrow room or standing in the Temple at Jerusalem, it seemed a thing incredible that he should say, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." Hedged in by the limitations of an earthly life and residence, it might seem unwarranted boasting for him to say, "Go ye and make disciples of all nations." But here under God's vast sky, when they saw him rising before their eyes into the infinite space of heaven, their vision cleared and broadened; their faith grew firm and glad.

Why, then, stand ye gazing at this wonder? The time soon passes for the silent, passive contemplation of the great mysteries of human experience. The time comes for the translation of these rapt visions of ours into deeds. The dream, if it be worth having, must begin to come true in some worthy achievement. The privilege of looking into the face of the Master must bring new impulse for doing what he would have us do. If you have seen the Lord Christ high and lifted up, if you have heard his voice, if you understand in some measure his great wish for human society, then the hour has struck for you to cease gazing upon those sublime verities in wonder and amazement — the hour has struck for you to work them out in actual life.

It required an angel, the narrative says, to give a different tilt to the faces of those disciples, to change them from the attitude where they gazed into the sky, into an attitude where they gave attention to the spiritual needs of the people about them. In our day when a profound intellectual interest is felt in everything in heaven above

and on the earth beneath and in the waters under the earth, it will take a legion of angels to transform all the gazers into doers. How deeply interested we are in our problems! How slow we are ofttimes in taking hold to solve them!

If you would really know him, make it the aim of your life to translate the vision of an ascended Christ into the experience of an Effective Christ as he works within you to accomplish his good pleasure. Stand not forever gazing at the sanctities of worship, at the perplexing mysteries of religious truth, at the difficulties in the way of realizing his vast ideals, but take hold somewhere, putting into operation the impulse you gain from looking upon his face.


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